When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet

Report by ANNA LOUISE STRONG

Anna Louise Strong with Apei

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Photographs by the Author

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"SERFS"—The "liberation" of Tibet will be a reality when the Red Army arrives, the young Communist Lanka (left) tells her childhood friend, the serf Jamba, in this film. She assures him that then "the oppressed life of the serfs will come to an end."

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I. TAKE-OFF FOR TIBET

"We urge you to take this trip seriously. When Comrade Chen Yi[1] went to Lhasa in 1956, he was ill for a considerable time afterwards. People have even died of this trip. We do not want to scare you — you have all been medically checked and a doctor will travel with you to take all precautions —but you should not take it lightly. If anyone wants to withdraw, phone us by noon tomorrow. Otherwise send in the money for your expenses."

We were meeting in Peking, nineteen correspondents, writers, radio and TV men who had applied to visit Tibet. We came from eleven countries, not counting the representative of the Peking *People's Daily,* who was going as our host. I myself had been accepted only three days earlier and had rushed for my check-up at the Peking Medical, that handsome central hospital built long ago by the Rockefeller Foundation, that has seen so much history and is again a fine center of medicine in Peking.

[1]Foreign Minister and Vice-Premier went to the formation of the Preparatory Committee for Tibet Autonomous Region in Lhasa in 1956.

My blood pressure of 130 over 65 was neatly within limits, but my age of seventy-three was against me. I would not adjust as easily as a younger person to the high elevation, which would range from 12,200 feet in Lhasa to 15,000 or more in the pastures and at least 21,000 in the flight. After an excellent electro-cardiogram the doctor gave a qualified permit: "Passed for Tibet if special care is taken and special arrangements made against over-exertion". He didn't want to be blamed if anything happened to me!

My hosts took his qualification seriously. The first "special arrangement" was that Chao Feng-feng, my own interpreter, would travel with me. She might also interpret for the group at times — on a group trip everyone is supposed to be helpful,—but her special job was to look after me. To relieve me of the weight of my camera, my Hermes Baby typewriter, my over-night bag on the plane. Above all, to watch me like a hawk and say: "You'd better go to bed now", and "I'll get the waitress to bring dinner to your room".

We went first for a rest at the beach in Peitaiho. It might be a week before we left for Lhasa, they said; we hoped it would be more. I needed a full month's rest, for I had been working day and night to finish my book "Tibetan Interviews" before the heat of August should make work impossible in Peking. The book had just gone to the printers; Feng-feng and I already had tickets and reservations at

Peitaiho. In fact I had been appalled when they phoned that I was accepted for Tibet.

"But I can't go until I have had a vacation", I protested. They replied: "It is up to you". So I had gone for my hospital check-up and left the next morning for the beach. "These group trips always have delays", I said comfortably to Feng-feng. "We might get even two weeks of rest".

The first night in cool air was marvellous; the first morning swim in that tepid sea was magic. Two weeks of this — even one week — would be a real rest. But after that wonderful swim, a phone call from Peking said we were leaving Saturday for Tibet. I got up at four the next morning and took the five o'clock train back, and went that afternoon to the first briefing, where they warned us to "take it seriously". I had had just twenty-four hours of rest in Peitaiho and just one swim. Could I face Tibet on that?

When I saw the group I was still more disquieted. They were all men and mostly young. Later I learned that there was another woman in the party, Eva Siao, doing photographs for the TV of the German Democratic Republic. They were youthful go-getters who would make three trips a day, morning, afternoon and evening. How could I keep up with that? Yet it would be unpardonable — as well as very unpleasant — to find myself a drag on the group. For we were the first correspondents — the first foreigners of any kind — to see the beginning of the new "democratic

Tibet". Serfdom had been less than a month legally abolished by the resolution issued July 17th by the new local government of Tibet. The law's enforcement had yet to be organized. This was what we were to see.

Only five months earlier, rebellion had flared in Lhasa, led by four of the six *kaloons* — cabinet-ministers — in the *kasha,* and by most of the top monasteries. They had announced Tibet's secession from China and attacked all offices of the Central Government with armed force including artillery. The rebellion had been quickly suppressed. Some of the rebel leaders had been captured, others had fled to India, taking the Dalai Lama, whose part in the rebellion was still unclear.

These events had opened at long last the road to reform. For on March 28th, just as those rebel leaders who constituted a majority of the *kasha* were about to flee into India, the State Council of China issued a special order dissolving the local government of Tibet — to wit, the *kasha* — and putting local government in the hands of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region. This was the committee set up in 1956, with a wider representation than any Tibet government had yet had, since it united areas that had previously been in some conflict.

The Dalai Lama was already its chairman; he remained titular chairman even in absentia. The Panchen Erdeni was already its first vice-chairman; he

was asked to become acting chairman while awaiting the Dalai's return. Members of the committee who had joined the armed rebellion were expelled and replaced by new members. Government thus continued without a break through forms that had been already applauded throughout Tibet two years earlier. Policies, however, changed.

The first session of the Preparatory Committee, held April 8th, when rebellion had been crushed in Lhasa but not yet in Loka or Takun, did little more than announce itself and accept responsibility of government. Its leading members then left for Peking to attend the session of the People's National Congress, the government of all China, in which several of them were deputies. On their return, the Preparatory Committee held its second session, opening June 28th and lasting several weeks. A large number of "observers" were invited from all sections of the people, and here, for the first time in Tibet's long history, serfs had sat down in the same room with lords. For in the interim between the two sessions, the rebellion had been ended in Loka and elsewhere and peasant meetings had been held all over Tibet, supporting the new government and sending to it resolutions, which demanded the abolition of serfdom, "the Democratic Reform".

This Democratic Reform had been decreed in two stages. Personal servitude and the forced, unpaid labor known as *ula* were at once abolished; the organizing of local governments based on the peasants

would take longer, and the transfer of land to the tillers longer still. For law cannot make men free; each man must take his freedom and each community must organize its law.

One of the most sensational changes would be in the monasteries, announced by the Panchen Lama himself. The courts, jails, torture system and floggings which they had imposed not only on lamas but even on laymen, would be abolished, and yield to a system of county courts under secular rule. Meantime all lamas would be given "freedom of person" as citizens, which meant the right to leave the monastery and even to marry if they should choose. Many had entered the monastery in childhood, and had never had free choice. Nobody doubted that many of the lower lamas would leave the monasteries, in which they had been, as was said in the session's discussion, "like slaves in a monk's robe".

Why had the Panchen Erdeni, the chief above the monasteries, decreed this? It was said that he, himself a youth of twenty-one, was already aware that Tibet's long decline was attributed in large part to the number of males who, as lamas, refrained from production and from responsible reproduction, and also to the syphilis that followed the monasteries like a plague. Was he balancing this fact against the loss to the monasteries that would mean a gain to Tibet? For clearly the marriage and birth-rate would rise now, and the long decline of the population through the centuries would end.

Such were the changes beginning from that July 17th resolution. We were the first foreigners privileged to go and see.

•

When Feng-feng came to call me at 4.30 a.m. I was already awake. We were to fly by chartered plane to Sining, capital of Chinghai Province, for the first night. Thence we would take small military planes, adapted to high altitudes, with cabins unpressurized but supplied with an oxygen tank that dispensed air through outlets to oxygen masks at each seat. For several hours we would fly at 21,000 feet elevation or higher, to cross the massive Tang'La Range which itself soars to 20,000 feet. Because of the elevation, the wildness of terrain and the frequent changes of weather, the flight was said to be harder than the famous "Burma Hump" route by which planes brought supplies into China during the Japanese war. We must be well padded against the outer cold at 21,000 elevation, yet prepared to descend into scorching summer sun at Lhasa. All this, plus a typewriter and camera and note-books, must be included in twenty kilograms of baggage.

Feng-feng is one of those painfully honest young women who will go up to the baggage checker and say: "Do you want to weigh these too?", and exhibit the camera which I have neatly draped under her coat and the over-night bag whose modest canvas tries to hide the eight pounds which its bottles, slip-

pers, sweater, night-gown and accessories weigh. In this case the baggage-checker was so astounded that he waved her impatiently along. My suit-case with the typewriter had checked in at nineteen kilos, while Feng-feng's suit-case, without typewriter, was only fifteen. Officially being six whole kilos underweight, we felt gloatingly virtuous over the Czech with the two big cameras and the tape-recorder, who was really in desperate case. If anyone worries about Czech news-services, I report that a special dispensation was finally given him.

Glasses of hot tea and cold orangeade were brought to us on the plane. It was not yet eleven when we made Sian, found a bus waiting, drove to town for a big hotel lunch and got back for a take-off at noon precise. We had been very gay all morning but after lunch I began to feel my age. I yawned, stretched, kicked off my shoes in order to wriggle my feet which seemed to be going to sleep. I put it down to the heavy lunch, not followed by any nap. Later I was to learn another reason.

The wind favored; every time our hostess passed she estimated our arrival earlier in the most auspicious way. We reached Sining at 2.30 and drove to a fine new hotel of many storeys, with gardens in the yard. I drew a suite of two rooms and bath, with floral decorated stationery in the desk and a gorgeous cerise satin coverlet heavily embroidered in orange roses on the bed. The doctor, dropping around to take my blood-pressure again, found it 120 over 65, better than

in Peking. He congratulated and asked whether I had felt any oxygen lack on the flight from Sian.

"From Sian", I exclaimed. "Of course not". Then I recalled all that yawning and fidgeting and mentioned it. "You were flying at 13,000 feet, higher than Lhasa", he said. "If it didn't bother you more than that, you'll do. Your pulse is sixty at present, better than some of the young men". My spirits soared.

So I went to the interview we had with provincial officials; there were things about Chinghai to ask. We learned first, with surprise, that the city of Sining was much older than the province of Chinghai, or than any provincial boundaries hereabout. It was a walled outpost of the Tang Dynasty some fourteen hundred years ago. It had been in its time the capital of an area which is now five provinces. At the time of "liberation"[1] it had had a hundred thousand population, only half in the city proper and the rest in

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[1] "The liberation", as referred to in China, means the liberation of China from more than a hundred years of occupation and suppression by foreign imperialist powers. Originally used during the war with Japan, it referred to the liberation of areas from Japanese occupation, by "the People's Liberation Army". There were many large "Liberated Areas" for years before the new central government was set up in Peking. Today, when "the liberation" is mentioned without quotes or qualification, it refers to the inauguration of the People's Republic of China, on October 1, 1949. However, Tibet was not "liberated" until 1951, and "the liberation of Taiwan" is still demanded before China's liberation can be considered complete.

suburbs. Today, at our visit, it had 460,000 people, of whom 340,000 were urban, the rest rural. The growth came from its five hundred new factories, and especially from the development of the province for which Sining was organizing center. Sining was not yet on a railroad, but it would be by October first.... (Postscript. It was.)

The province of Chinghai, we learned from another official, was formerly part of a large administrative unit which contained also Shensi and Kansu. . . Its present boundaries were set as late as 1929, when its warlord Ma Pu-fang — notorious even among warlord for graft and cruelty — exchanged recognitions with Chiang Kai-shek. Chinghai had 1,400,000 people at the time of "liberation"; now it has 2,400,000. Its biggest growth is in the Tsaidam Basin, a vast wasteland where great oil strikes have been made that are being developed. The oil goes out by trucks but will soon go by rail and later by pipeline. . . . Chinghai is in a boom!

"Chinghai", they said, in tones that would be recognized in the American West or in boom areas anywhere, "is still very sparsely settled but its future is great. Here lies the source of ten great rivers, including the Yellow and the Yangtze. Here we have over three million acres of arable land of which nearly two million have never been touched by plough. Here we have twelve million head of livestock, but there are natural grazing lands for eighty million.

We have also many minerals. We have a great future here."

Chinghai adjoins Tibet and shares with it the title "Roof of the World". For while the northeast part, around Sining, is only seven to eight thousand feet in elevation, the southern part soars into great ranges and high valleys, with an average elevation of 13,000 feet. It is a multi-national province, with eight different nationalities, of which the Han majority is more than all others combined, being 1,400,000, while Tibetans rank next at 400,000 and the Huis (Moslems) come third with 220,000. Chinghai is largely composed of autonomous national districts, five of which are Tibetan. Though Tibetans rank only second in numbers, their areas comprise more than half the area. Their lands are mostly in the south, in the high pastures.

Since the Dalai Lama in his anti-China statement given June 30th from India, had been claiming most of Chinghai in his demand for "Greater Tibet", I asked why these five autonomous Tibetan areas should be organized as parts of Chinghai instead of being united with Tibet itself, which they adjoined. The local official smiled and told me that there were many reasons, but I would see the first and biggest if I would look out of our plane about noon tomorrow as we passed over the Tang'La Range. This massive range is not only 20,000 feet high, eternally snow-capped, but also very long and wide. It has been through centuries an almost impassable barrier, crossed indeed by daring pilgrims and even by a few

conquering armies, but never by government administration. The Tibetans north of it have developed differently from those south of it; they do not even speak the language of Lhasa. In fact, the five different Tibetan areas in Chinghai are so separated by high ranges that they hardly understand each other; that is why there are five areas instead of one. What unites them—what gives them the name "Tibetans"—is the possession of a common lamaist religion, with monasteries where the scriptures are read in the classical Tibetan language. They differ in blood-lines, in historic development, in daily speech.

"Has Lhasa ever, in any period, had temporal rule over any part of what is now Chinghai?" I persisted.

"Never! The Chinese Emperors conferred title direct on the tribal chiefs," the local official replied.

His words, I think, are true, but I also think they need some explanation. In the long feudal centuries, the monasteries themselves exercised a form of loose temporal rule. They assumed ownership of vast lands and leased these to the tribes, which they thus dominated. Their top lamas made pilgrimage to Lhasa, and carried tribute from as far as Buriat Mongolia, which is today in the USSR. But the same tribes paid tribute also to whatever warlord or governor was recognized by China's central government, and Lhasa itself paid tribute to Peking from the Tang Dynasty down. When Lhasa at last developed a secular government, the *kasha,* its mandate never crossed the Tang'La Range.

The claims that were being made abroad at this time, in the name of the Dalai Lama but usually without his explicit words, that Peking was committing genocide against the Tibetan people by flooding their lands with Han settlers, were based not on any events in Tibet proper, where the local government has not yet permitted new settlers, but on the booms in adjacent provinces, especially in Chinghai. These provinces have, however, been mixed of many nationalities for centuries.

*

After these talks with officials, and just as I was feeling cockiest, the altitude of Sining, which is only a little above 7,000, hit me. I was talking after supper with a friend in my room, when I lost interest in talk and went in a hurry to bed. I was afraid to cross the room for fear of falling, and hesitated even to sit up in bed lest I topple over. This was highly puzzling for I felt no pain at all, merely an inability to move. Feng-feng came to tell me that we would rise at 4.30 and leave for the airport at six.

"I doubt it", I replied. "I couldn't walk downstairs".

The doctor came and took my pulse and said my heart was beating properly and I would be all right. A phone call said the flight was postponed because of storms over the range.

"Postpone it for a week if you like", I replied, and settled again to sleep.

On the following day the doctor came with the consoling news that several of the younger people had been "touched by the altitude". I wasn't the only one. "You'll do all right", he said. "Take it easy till you take the plane". I worried a bit about what Lhasa would do to me, if the moderate elevation of Sining had knocked me out. I needn't have worried. Never again on the trip was I knocked helpless as I was in Sining; I do not yet know why. Perhaps the three days in bed added to the day in Peitaiho made four days' vacation; it proved to be enough!

By the second day everyone was restless and they fixed up a trip to Gumbum Monastery. The Chinese call it Ta Erh, but since we are going Tibetan, we'll use the Tibetan name. It is famous as the birthplace of Tson Khapa, the great reformer of the 14th century, who founded the Yellow Sect, now the dominant religion in Tibet. Two of his ten chief disciples were then reincarnated down the ages as the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni. The monastery still keeps residences for these two dignitaries, who lived here so many hundred years ago. However, when the Panchen passed through Sining on his way back from Peking to Lhasa, in June 1959, he went to Gumbum for all the ceremonies — the conch horns, the exchange of *hatas,* the prayers before statues of Tson Khapa and all the past Panchens — but he came to sleep at our nice hotel in Sining. The Panchen is getting modernized!

I wanted to see Gumbum but I gave heed to the doctor. "I won't risk Lhasa for a local monastery", I said. "I'll stay in bed". Then Feng-feng asked if she could go in my place. I hailed the idea. "You'll be a correspondent", I declared, and told her what facts to get.

Feng-feng is conscientious but she missed out on color. I don't yet know what Gumbum looks like except that "it spreads up the valley much further than you think when you see the front". Elsewhere I learned that it has some famous pagodas for which the present Peking government gave funds "to repair a national monument". Feng-feng had all the data tabulated about the lamas and what happened to them in the "reform". Gumbum, being in Chinghai, had its reform more than a year earlier than Tibet. It might give us a hint of what would come.

Two years ago Gumbum had between one and two thousand lamas. Some people had claimed over three thousand, but this was denied by a county representative. "Perhaps they had three thousand long ago, but in recent years it was just over one thousand. Now it is 496. That is because the peasants got land and the lamas got 'freedom of person'." Many lamas had, therefore, gone home to work the land with their fathers and brothers. Those who remained in the monastery ran it "democratically", electing the administration. This was in two parts, the part that ran the religion and the part that ran the farm.

Gumbum had had twenty thousand acres of land; it was farmed by serfs. When the serfs were freed in 1958, the monastery was told it could keep whatever land could be farmed by its own labor. Since they had considerable livestock, they decided to keep two thousand acres of land and all the animals. Some lamas now grow grain, others vegetables, some run a dairy farm and some handle a transport service to the city for the monastery and the neighboring peasants. Some work at restoring the monastery itself; since Gumbum is a historic monument, Peking gives money for this.

Not all the lamas do physical labor. Of the 496, fifty are over sixty years of age and thirty are under eight; none of these work. Gumbum has also a large staff of top clerics, some ten Living Buddhas, reincarnations of famous clerics of the past. These spend their time on the scriptures, and conduct services and officiate at weddings and funerals, for the faithful pay well for the dignity of a Living Buddha at such occasions. Salaries to top clerics are paid by the Monastery Fund, seventy percent of which comes from the lamas' labor and thirty percent from contributions of believers.

The young lama who showed the correspondents through told them that he was "living much better than before". Feng-feng asked, as I bade her, whether the upper lamas also lived better than formerly. He replied that he thought they did. None of the higher-ups came to report and they might say otherwise. The young lama said that top lamas got

salaries for conducting services, and special gifts from believers and also kept the best houses. They no longer got big sums from exploiting serf labor, which they used to keep for their private savings. Maybe they were even using up those private savings now; he wouldn't know. He knew they still lived better than the lower lamas. Also the lamas, even the lower ones, still lived somewhat better than the peasants because they already had their housing and had no big families to feed.

Several lamas had married and remained in the monastery, going home to their wives on week-ends. To stay in the monastery thus they had to be accepted by vote of the others, but if their work was good, they had no trouble. On the whole, Feng-feng did a good job.

II. DE LUXE TO LHASA

Thunder and lightning were still crashing and rain pouring when we went to bed in Sining on August 11th, but the weather report said this was the tail lash of a typhoon in another province and that it would clear for flight by dawn. The forecast was accurate; when Feng-feng called me at five in the pre-dawn darkness, the stars were bright and the air crisp.

"Put on your warmest things", she warned. "It's cold here before dawn and it will be colder on the flight". She lifted into the hall for the porter the suitcase we had packed the night before. I dressed in the padded trousers and jacket that were winter wear in Peking and carried wool socks too thick to wear inside my shoes, but intended for the floor of a plane which gets very cold in a high flight. Breakfast came to my room at 5.45.

I was as ready now as anyone; three days in bed in Sining, added to that one day in Peitaiho, made four days' rest. I would make it do. To prove it, I had gone downstairs the previous evening to the dancing party tendered us by the local authorities and danced with the governor of Chinghai and the Party secretary

of the province, just to show off. The ever-watching Feng-feng tolerated two dances and then came over to say: "That's enough; better go to bed". I went. So I had been awake and ready when she had come at five.

We left the hotel at six — since time in China is reckoned at Peking time, it was not yet four o'clock by the local sun — and made the airport in half an hour. Four silver-gray Ilyushkin planes, of Soviet-make, were lined up in the gray dawn, each holding eight. There were more than thirty of us now, with our nineteen foreign correspondents, our two Chinese hosts, our interpreters and doctor and a few top men of the local Air Command who would go in the first plane to chart the way. For though the route was known to all the pilots, the weather over the range might change with any hour. This was part of the difficulty with this flight, on which no take-off was permitted until weather was reported fair on the entire route. Even then planes had at times been grounded on an emergency base midway.

The planes would take off at five-minute intervals. We had been assigned our plane the previous evening; mine was the second plane. With me would fly Secretary-General Tang Li of the *People's Daily*, Alan Winnington of the London *Daily Worker* and M. Domogadski of the *Pravda*, the two chairmen the journalists had elected the previous evening to handle contacts and speeches for the group. With us was also the doctor and Feng-feng.

The sun was still a yellow glow below the horizon when the bright metal steps were rolled up to Plane No. Two. The assistant chief of the Area Air Command came to see us installed. As he wished me a comfortable flight, I asked if it was true that this flight was harder than the famous Burma Hump Route of the Pacific War. He began to reassure me. "The weather is fine; everything will be okay".

"I don't doubt it", I said. "That wasn't what I asked. I want to know if this flight is harder than the Burma Hump".

He got me now. "A little harder", he smiled. So thus we advance. Yesterday's heroic risk becomes today's expedition of correspondents, and tomorrow perhaps a routine travel flight. Could Tibet, that land of mystery, even become routine? But a railway was planned to Lhasa in the next few years.

I was curious to see the plane's interior because of a bit of news imparted the previous evening at the dance. The local Air Command had been concerned on learning that they were expected to carry me to Tibet, for I was by far the oldest person they had taken on this route. Feeling their honor involved in delivering me not only safely but in good health, like a package marked "right side up with care", they were trying to get a bed of some kind, instead of an ordinary seat. It was not yet sure that they could arrange this; if they did, then the first sleeping-plane to Lhasa would be a bit of history.

We take the famous Chinghai-Lhasa highway

Nineteen correspondents from twelve countries reach the Potala Palace

I was stunned by the elegance of the cabin I entered. It had been from the start a luxury job, probably designed for the Dalai Lama or Panchen Erdeni or some other high dignitary's use. It was soft yet bright in a cream and blue color scheme, with six porcelain dome lights in the cream vaulted ceiling, and a blue and yellow rug over the entire floor. Heavy curtains of deep blue velours near the entrance could be drawn to shut off the cold end of the plane, where the toilets and luggage deposit were. On either side of a wide aisle stood large reclining chairs, placed singly, each with a window and an oxygen mask, which attached to a central air tank. On one side, between two facing chairs, was a table large enough to hold tea for several people, as well as cameras and books.

Just opposite this table stood a sumptuous sofa-bed, last word in luxury. Upholstered in warm cream with a blue design, it was covered by a down coverlet in royal blue satin, neatly confined in a double-sheet. Two pale blue pillows at the head were edged with lace frills and topped with lace doilies of such splendor that I tenderly laid them aside before daring to touch my head to the pillows. The oxygen mask lay handy. This was truly Lhasa de luxe!

It was still cold and I saw no reason to sit up for the take-off, so I quickly curled up under blue satin just as Alan Winnington followed me into the plane. He let out a shout at the sight of the boudoir decor. "Here's where you get your picture took", he declared, pulling out his camera.

"You can have all the pictures as long as I get the bed", I retorted, and posed comfortably both with and without the oxygen mask.

Alan said: "It's fixed for a prime minister".

"Prime Minister, nothing!" I retorted. "They don't get lace and satin. It's for the Queen of Sheba, no less!"

We rolled into the field just as the sun came sharp above the clear horizon, a ball of pale gold. Twenty minutes later our air-gauge showed 4,500 meters up; I worked it out as about 14,850 feet elevation, higher than any mountain peak in the United States. In the next five minutes, as we rose to 5,000 meters (16,500 feet) I felt the warm air from the motors coming in. Feng-feng was taking off her coat. This was a heated plane! None of us had yet felt any need of oxygen. That was what three days in Sining had done!

Despite this initial brag, the flight was tiring. High elevation seems to affect the human body not only through the lungs. I think I could have made it in one of the reclining chairs, but I was very grateful for the bed. I found the scenery less overwhelming than expected. The continuity of rock and snow masses grew monotonous; they flattened below us into desolation, broken by occasional moments of high beauty. The first of these was our passage over the great salt lake which the Chinese today call Ching-hai, and from which they take the name for the province . . . I prefer the old Mongol name, which China also used in the Tang Dynasty: Kokonor. It lay be-

neath us in a sheet of brilliant blue. Further on we came to the ranges, snow-capped, each higher than the last. I sat up for a minute or two for each of them, and then lay down again. At nine o'clock we made a landing to take on gas at an interim airport. Some people have been stranded there a week by weather. I was glad that we were not. We took off again at ten for the highest flight, over the Tang'La Range.

We climbed steeply to 6,600 meters (nearly 22,000 feet) and held there. The Tang'La is not only high, rising 20,000 feet in air, but is very long and wide. There is no way to escape this massive barrier between Chinghai and Tibet. One must go over it, either as the pilgrims of the past, on foot and horse, or today's traffic from inland China, by auto-truck, or as we did it, by plane. Our gas-masks, which had been an amusement, became a need. It was not necessary to use them continuously: the high air in the cabin was sharp, crisp, full of ozone, tasting more delicious than the air in the mask, which seemed by contrast warm and stale. But after a short exposure to the air of the cabin, one grew a trifle dizzy and turned to draw additional breath from the mask. Between times, I looked down on snowy ranges that rolled one after another beneath us, somewhat flattened by the height. The snow increased as we passed from the dry north where weather is determined by the deserts to the southern slopes where winds from the distant Indian Ocean blow in. Even these high

rolling peaks at last grew monotonous; the second leg of the flight dragged out more than the first. By one o'clock we dropped to Tibet's airport, and the scenery which the flight had flattened, rose in magnificent snow peaks around us, and in long green mountain pastures, painted in light.

As our planes came in like clockwork at five-minute intervals, we learned for the first time that a fifth plane had followed us, empty, so that if any plane had a forced landing, its passengers might be picked up and taken along without a halt. As far as human planning could do it, our flight had been insured.

A reception committee from Lhasa met us with thirteen autos. This was the first surprise, that Lhasa, which only a few years ago had never seen even a cart wheel, had now this auto-fleet. Our next surprise was to learn that we were still nearly half a day's journey from Lhasa by a mountain road. It was explained that the previous local government, the *kasha,* would not allow Peking any nearer site. Our third surprise was to learn that the Central Government of China, which the Western press denounced as the ruthless suppressor of Tibet, had for eight years submitted to this local dictation, even in a matter so important to national defense as the air connection with Tibet. We were also told that even this place which the *kasha* permitted had been considered unsuitable by experts, as its clearance was not as long as the height demanded, but the Chinese pilots by careful maneuver, had managed to make it do.

Our hosts led us into a dining-room and proffered lunch. They also offered oxygen from two tall tanks at the end of the room that looked like gasoline service tanks in miniature. Though the elevation here was probably not far from 15,000 feet, nobody felt the need. It seemed — and this was confirmed when we made our return trip — that the fresh air of the pastures has a quality more stimulating than the lower valley air in Lhasa.

"A million serfs have stood up", were the words I most recall from the greeting given us in the brief luncheon speech by Fang Tse-shing, head of the propaganda department. "They are burying the old serfdom and are building a new Tibet. This land, frozen in feudalism for centuries, has come to life and its people have taken their destiny in their own hands. They are building a democratic Tibet which will become a socialist Tibet. All the clamors of the imperialists are useless. The wheel of history turns always forward and not back. We shall build here a happy tomorrow".

We now learned for what purpose we had elected two chairmen for the correspondents. Domogadsky, of *Pravda,* had the job of rising to make a response. He congratulated the airforce for organizing "this heroic air-route". Then we were swiftly on our way. Hurry was urged, both to get down to a lower elevation, and to reach Lhasa before dark.

The mountains, now that we were down among them, were far more impressive than they had seemed

from the plane. In the high, thin air, all nature seemed penetrated with light. Snow peaks, rock cliffs, long sloping pastures were all more brilliant in color than any landscape I had ever seen. The sky was bluer, the grass greener, even the color of the rocks brighter and more varied in this upper sunlight than colors appear at lower elevation, blanketed by depths of air. What from the plane had appeared a monotony of gray rock and white snow broke now into a vast variety. Cliffs were red, lavender, even orange, indicating a probable presence of minerals. Pastures were dotted with yaks, sheep, goats. Streams of clear water, blue from the melting snow, tumbled across the highway. Some day this should be one of earth's great vacation lands!

Herdsmen appeared among the animals or standing beside rock shelters. The rags that hung in festoons of filth from their bodies indicated incredible poverty, and their tiny rock shelters were poor barriers against the outer cold of night. But they stood erect, and most of them waved or shouted greeting. Near one cluster of shelters, four small boys rushed up to the road and lined up in salute. Our trip had been nowhere announced yet, and nobody on these pastures knew who we were, but they knew from the line of autos that we came from the airport and had some connection with the great innovations sweeping their country. The words "a million serfs have stood up" seemed very appropriate. It was as if the landscape had come alive.

The road was wide and carried considerable traffic. It was part of the main Sining-Lhasa highway. Before we reached Lhasa we met at least fifty seven-ton trucks. The highway was hardly smooth; it was a road for jeeps and trucks rather than for passenger cars. It was subject in places to ravages from streams or rock slides, and we passed many repair gangs, both of men and of women. In almost every case they waved or shouted a welcome. One group of women was singing at their work. On another occasion we met a train of donkeys and the front one tangled with our radiator, bringing us to a quick stop. The donkey-driver came with his stick, disentangled the donkey, and exchanged cheerful apologies with our chauffeur as he went on his way.

"Were the Tibetans like this formerly?" I asked those of the correspondents who had visited Tibet in 1955. "I never have seen a livelier people".

"They were never like this before", was the answer. "They have come alive".

Steadily we dropped from the high pastures to the valleys. Half way to Lhasa we came to a road junction, where a road to the right led towards Shigatze, the seat of the Panchen Erdeni, and thence towards India. Our road to Lhasa turned left. We stopped briefly at a small settlement and were offered tea, the pale, unsweetened tea of the Hans or the salty buttered tea of Tibet as we might choose. Beyond this our road plunged down through a mountain gorge. When we emerged, we began to pass small settle-

ments, with fields of barley and beans. Monasteries appeared on hillsides and up ravines.

The road grew rougher; the streams that crossed it were larger, swollen with the melted snows of late afternoon, spreading over the road and cutting into it so that each time when our auto plunged into a sheet of water — which was now often twenty or thirty feet wide — I wondered whether we would emerge on the other side. The drivers, it seemed, were accustomed to this; they entered the water carefully in low gear, picked their way with circumspection, and chugged slowly, steadily across. The entire line of thirteen autos followed at regular intervals.

The sun was already low in the west when we entered a long valley, passed by a large monastery which later we were to know as Drepung,[1] the largest monastery in Tibet, and suddenly saw far ahead what seemed like a red and white jewel, shining in the last gold of the setting sun. We knew it at once — the famous Potala Palace, built by the Fifth Dalai Lama as the residence for the living Dalai and the tomb for the Dalais who had died. He had chosen the site well, on a hill that rose in the middle of the long valley, catching always the sun, visible from afar to the pilgrims who came by whatever road. He had built well also, a red palace which held the tombs, flanked on both sides by a large white palace for the living, under wide roofs of gold. It was a new type of

[1] Also given Daipung, Depung.

architecture, with the side walls sloping inward like the mountains, as if the structure were part of a living cliff. It testified to a talent for originality among Tibetans, which might again revive from the stagnation of centuries.

We were still several miles from the Potala. We wound around many jutting hills and splashed over many small streams as the sun dropped below the horizon. We dodged increasing numbers of carts or donkeys of peasants or townsmen going home for the night. Haze drew over the earth with the sun's setting and obliterated the still distant Potala Palace. The upper air and the hills were still bright. At the edge of Lhasa we met a long line of workers carrying spades; they waved their spades at us and cheered. Our driver told us they were going home from a volunteer ditch-digging to drain a flooded area.

"There were lamas among them", he added. We had not yet known that the volunteering of lamas for community labor was considered significant, a sign of the national rebirth.

We reached the Potala Palace and rounded its northern edge; it was now a tall white shadow on the cliffs. We turned into a large compound, circled a garden of brilliant flowers and stopped at a guest house. From the garden the Potala was visible again, against the darkening western sky. We were just twelve hours from Sining; it seemed a different world. This flight over the Tang'La Range and down the high pastures and long valleys had taken the pilgrims of past cen-

turies more than a year. It seemed a bit of a miracle that all of our thirteen autos had made it in proper sequence. Some were ordinary passenger cars and some were jeeps and none of them looked new. All had kept to the line and none had stuck in water or had even a flat tire on the way.

"You are expected to rest tomorrow", they told us. "In the evening there will be a banquet and a dance. There will be no trips or interviews till the following day."

The reason for rest was clear when we saw how we gasped for breath in climbing the stairs to the second floor where the bedrooms were. Lhasa, much lower than the pastures, still lay above twelve thousand feet elevation. The British had stated 12,800, but the Chinese said 3,680 meters which my arithmetic makes out as around 12,150 feet. In any case it was as high as a first class mountain-top in most of the world. Our problem would be to get breath.

I was given a corner room with windows on two sides. They looked on a range of wild mountains and on Yo Wang Hill, the highest point in Lhasa, where the College of Tibetan Medicine stands. There was a wall-to-wall carpet, a bright Tibetan weave of green, orange and yellow from the Gyantse handicraft looms. There were two over-stuffed chairs with a stand between them for serving tea. The bed was wide and covered with a bright quilt. In the corner between the windows stood an enormous desk and a desk-chair with foam-rubber cushion. A washstand near the

door held a bowl of hot water brought by a maid. The room had everything but running water and a view of the Potala. Lhasa had as yet no water system. As for the view of the Potala, Feng-feng told me to cross the hall to her room when I wanted to look at it.

"They have given you the south and west exposure", she said. "In Lhasa you will want the sun".

We would want the sun, we would want rest, we would want, above all, air. No transfer to Lhasa could be quite easy, even if made de luxe. But never had any trip been so carefully planned and cushioned to save all strength for the coming work.

III. FIRST BRIEFING

For the first few days we were asked to rest and get used to the altitude. Twenty-four hours after our arrival, they gave us a banquet, a reception and a dance; all went to the banquet and many to the dance. I omitted the dancing; I still gasped for breath at every third step. The younger people spent the day shopping in Lhasa, for which some paid with exhaustion.

They found a market place where fascinating bits of old hand-hammered silver could be dug from under old clothes. They found many Indian and Nepalese traders selling foreign wares, apparently brought in without duty and selling for whatever could be got. There were tempting bargains in Zeiss cameras while a can of Nescafé could be bought for one yuan. Within an hour after they reached the market the Nescafé rose to three yuan and other prices similarly skyrocketed. Our hosts asked us to stop individual shopping, which was upsetting the market for everyone in Lhasa, and to locate what we wanted and let them do the buying. Prosaic daily necessities could be bought at a state trading store near our hostel. Thus I bought batteries for my flashlight and a new type-

writer ribbon without going downtown. Both of these seemed incongruous in Lhasa.

Avoiding physical effort in the first two days, we substituted interviews with chiefs of government and army, who gave us a first briefing on Tibet, its history, economic and social condition, the achievements of the past eight years, the March rebellion and its quelling, and the new program for "democratic reform". Much of this I already knew for I had met in Peking the three chief figures in today's Tibet: the Panchen Erdeni, who, in the Dalai Lama's absence, was chief ecclesiastical figure and acting chairman of government; Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, — known for short as Apei, — secretary-general and chief executive of the new government; and Chang Ching-wu, who had come to Lhasa in August 1951 as Resident for the Central Government of China, in pursuance of the 1951 Agreement for Tibet's "peaceful return to the motherland", signed between the Dalai Lama and Peking. Since extended material from all these has been published in my book "Tibetan Interviews", only brief condensation needed for understanding our visit will be given here.

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China is a multi-national country and Tibet is one of its largest sub-divisions. That Tibet has been an integral part of China for seven hundred years is held by all Chinese and recognized, at times with reservations, by all foreign powers. It is also the view of most Tibetans, though movements of secession have

at times occurred, none of which rallied enough strength to succeed.

The historical relation of Tibet with China is usually taken as beginning in 641 A.D. when Tibet's first notable king, Srontsan Gampo, married the princess Wen Cheng of the Tang Dynasty and thereafter paid tribute to the Tang. The princess is still in Tibet a figure of songs, fairytales and operas which say that she "brought Buddhism to Tibet as her dowry" and also silk-worms, water-wheels, handicraftsmen, paper-makers, wine-makers, silk-weavers, the superior techniques of the Tang. The famous statue of Buddha, said to have been self-created and hence most holy, which the princess brought and for which she built a temple, still stands in a close-hung shrine of Jokhan — I saw it by the light of thousands of butter-lamps in the hands of pilgrims — the holiest object in Tibet's holiest temple.

Theological experts say that the princess indeed created a favorable climate for Buddhism, a task in which another wife of King Srontsan, a princess from Nepal, also helped. But it took a long procession of monks and scholars from India over several centuries to convey "the whole doctrine of Buddhism". When Buddhism died out in India in the tenth century, the scriptures had already been translated into Tibetan. A form of Tibetan Buddhism, known as "lamaism", which by this time included primitive beliefs of nomad tribes that Buddha never knew, grew from Lhasa as a new base.

A century after Wen Cheng built the first temple, another King of Tibet married another princess of the Tang, and in 821 A.D. the Tang emperor Mu Tsung built in Lhasa in front of Jokhan temple a monument "to the unity of uncle and nephew" which stands today. When one thinks of the lack of roads in those centuries, and how far away Lhasa seems even by plane today, one is surprised that such contacts were ever maintained. They lapsed in following centuries until the Mongol Conquest brought unity again.

"It was Kublai Khan who took Tibet into China, about 1250 by your western calendar." That was how Apei put it to me. Apei should know. He comes of a family that has sat in seats of government in Tibet a thousand years, first as petty kings to the east of Lhasa, and, after Kublai, as nobles holding high government post. In the history he learned from tutors in the family domain, Kublai's achievement was called "the political unification". The term was apt, for Kublai may not have thought he "took Tibet into China", but that he took both China and Tibet into a Mongol empire, his being a Mongol rule. But Mongols, Tibetans and Hans all agree that Kublai Khan united them all in an empire, and made Peking the capital. This "political unification", in which the Hans were the dominant population and culture and which in history is therefore known as China, continued to the present day.

Tibet remained a part of it, while Mongols, Hans and Manchus succeeded each other in rule. That

China's sovereignty was loose and at times contested, nobody denies. All China more than once broke into warring parts. When China broke into factions, Tibet broke off as one of them; when China was again united under a strong central government, Tibet was again a part. The last time this happened was early in the present century when the Manchu Dynasty fell and China broke into spheres of warlords. In Tibet the Thirteenth Dalai Lama declared an "independence" that never became unanimous.[1] Tibetan warlords fought Szechuan warlords for possession of a province marked on the maps of Chiang Kai-shek as Sikang. Chiang's government never succeeded in unifying the outer areas of China, neither Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang or Tibet. Yet even in this period, Tibetans sought the sanction of the Kuomintang government for the ordination of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Tenth Panchen Erdeni. By 1942 and 1946, Tibet's local government, the *kasha*, was sending its deputies to Chiang's "National Congress of China", in Chungking and then in Nanking.

This loose yet permanent relation of Tibet within China has been recognized in the diplomacy of foreign powers. No foreign power in seven centuries has sent an ambassador to Lhasa or recognized Tibet as a separate nation. Even when Britain seized Lhasa by armed force in 1904 and dictated a treaty in the

[1] The 9th Panchen Erdeni remained loyal to China and fled for his life to Chinghai; Chamdo nobles also fought the *kasha's* rule.

Potala Palace, the bill for the £750,000 indemnity was sent to the Emperor in Peking and collected from him. The monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism also, though they spread through Mongolia into Buriat Mongolia, which is in the USSR today, sought sanction by China's central government for each new incarnation of Dalai Lama or Panchen Erdeni. "All incarnations have to have the approval of the central government of China", was said to me by Chao Pu-chu, head of the Buddhist Theological Research Institute in Peking.

The merging of priest with king, which became Tibet's form of government, also dates from Kublai Khan. When Pagspa, the learned prelate of Tibet, helped create an alphabet for the Mongols, the grateful emperor named him "Prince of Tibet and Tutor to the Emperor" and made him "King of the Law in the Western Land of the Buddha" as far as Kokonor. Some authors today, seeking to advance Tibet at the expense of China, hold that Kublai Khan did not "make" Pagspa king but "reverenced him as pope". The concepts are not wholly contradictory; one doubts whether Kublai Khan "reverenced" anyone, but "tutor to the emperor" is a term of very high respect, and indicated Pagspa's special role.

There were no national states or sharp boundaries in those days on the great plains and deserts of Asia. There were nomad tribes fighting each other for grass and settlers advancing with farms, protected by walled towns. Monasteries were concerned with more than

religion. They assumed control of vast lands, leased these to tribal chiefs and thus brought a kind of feudal order. Far into Mongolia and into lands that today are part of India, tribes became knit by the common scriptures in the Tibetan tongue. The Chinese emperors were overlords whose empire advanced not only by conquest, but by mutual appreciation. Kublai and Pagspa were both in the business of unifying and pacifying tribes. The emperors promoted the advance of the monasteries in order to pacify the tribes, but limited their temporal rule, especially where the settlements advanced. The control of lands and tribes by monasteries continued in all Mongolian and Tibetan areas of China down to the land reform of the present day.

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All basic changes in Tibet from the time of Kublai Khan, were made or sanctioned by the Chinese Emperors, even the institution of the Dalai Lama itself.

In the theology of Tibetan Buddhism, which absorbed many beliefs of primitive tribes, beings exist who are so holy and wise that they can reincarnate themselves down the ages. They are called "chu-gu" in Tibetan, ("guru" in Sanskrit) and the Chinese call them "living Buddhas". Their number is unknown but there are said to be about a thousand persons who claim the title; they are prominent among heads of monasteries. The two highest of these "chu-gu" are the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni, who pre-

sumably reincarnate the two chief disciples of Tson Khapa, the religious reformer of the fourteenth century who founded the Yellow Sect, presently dominant in Tibet. These two are "spiritual brothers"; in any incarnation in which their ages are widely different, they are the "Father-and-Son", a word implying a unified being. They differ from other "chu-gu" chiefly in their possession of temporal power. This power, together with their titles, was given them by the Chinese emperors.

Almost four centuries after Kublai Khan, the first Ching (Manchu) emperor appointed the Fifth Dalai Lama to "unify the tribes".[1] The Fifth Dalai Lama thus became the first who had temporal power. His full title, as formalized by the emperor, was "the Dalai Lama, King of the Law in the Western Land of the Buddha, Spiritual Lord on Earth, All-Knowing, Holder of the Thunderbolt by Order of the Emperor". In many parts of Tibet today, and even in places which India now claims[2] in her border conflict with China, the land titles date from the Fifth Dalai Lama, and convey land from the Chinese Emperor to the Fifth Dalai Lama and from him to the local tribal chief. This Fifth Dalai Lama, possibly feeling the

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[1] Strictly speaking the emperor appointed the "fifth incarnation" and gave him the title of "Dalai Lama", which previous incarnations had not possessed. "Dalai" is a Mongolian word meaning "ocean", and implies "Ocean of wisdom".

[2] Areas which the McMahon Line claims for India were "unified" by the Fifth Dalai Lama and paid tribute to Lhasa until Indian troops seized them in 1951.

need of some local sanction in dealing with superstitious tribes, had a "revelation" that he was also the reincarnation of Chenrezi, a pre-Buddhist nature-god of Tibet. He had another "revelation" that the Panchen Erdeni reincarnated another aspect of Chenrezi, as the Dalai Lama's "teacher". The mystical unity of the two high incarnations was thus preserved.

The Panchen Erdeni was given his titles and temporal powers by the second Ching emperor. His title combines three languages, "Pan" being Sanskrit for "wise"[1], "chen" being Tibetan for "great", and "Erdeni" being Mongolian for "jewel"; he is thus the "great jewel of wisdom". The present Panchen Erdeni told me that his powers are "parallel" with those of the Dalai Lama and not "subordinate", and that this was decreed by several Chinese emperors. In politics, however, "parallel" powers are hard to maintain and in practise through the centuries, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni have each at different times been dominant in Tibet.

The relations of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni to each other and to the Chinese Emperors, were far too complex and changing to be briefly summarized. Emperor Chien Lung (1736-1795) favored the Panchen, and built him a palace in Jehol next to the emperor's own summer palace where each summer he received the tribute of the nomads, with the Panchen Erdeni's advice and help. Again in the mid-

[1] See Indian "Pandit".

nineteenth century, the Panchen Erdeni was the strong man of Tibet, who sent to the emperor for an "investigator" when the regent in Lhasa was murdering successive Dalai Lamas before they reached the age to assume power. This Panchen had a fanciful plot for overthrowing the Chinese empire in his "next incarnation" and founding a Buddhist empire on the style of Genghiz Khan.

In the present century, the Dalai Lama has been dominant, and the view grew in the West that he was overlord also of the territories of the Panchen Erdeni. This was because the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was a man of ability — the only Dalai Lama beside the Fifth who ever exerted real political power, — and because he had the support of the British in the years when China was weak. He declared "independence" from China, and killed or exiled sundry nobles and Living Buddhas who refused to support this declaration. The Panchen Erdeni was forced to flee into exile in Chinghai in 1923; and died in exile. The present Panchen, born in Chinghai, did not regain the seat in Tibet until 1952. During the Panchen's exile, from 1923 to 1952, the Dalai Lama and the secular government under him, known as the *kasha*, encroached on the Panchen's lands. This is the source of the view prevalent in the West, especially among British writers, that the Dalai Lama was overlord of the Panchen's territory. The Panchen Erdeni himself assured me in 1959 that any taking over of his

lands by the Dalai Lama had been "temporary usurpation", not sanctioned by Tibetan custom or law.

The *kasha* was a small cabinet of nobles, known as *kaloons,* who formed the secular arm of government under the Dalai Lama; it was authorized by emperor Chien Lung. A similar body, known as the *kanpo lije,* was authorized for the Panchen's territories. The intricate, changing relations among these feudal forces down the centuries are largely irrelevant now. I sum them up in the words of the Venerable Shirob Jaltso, chairman of the All-China Buddhist Association, and himself a Tibetan, who studied theology thirty-two years in Lhasa, in his speech to the National Congress of China in April 1959:

> Tibet has been one of China's administrative districts for seven hundred years. . . The Fifth Dalai Lama, the first to appear in the political arena, was appointed head of Tibet by the Central Government in the reign of the Emperor Kang Hsi (1662-1722). . . The *kasha* was authorized as local government of Tibet . . . by the Central Government under Emperor Chien Lung (1736-1795). The leading position of the Dalai Lama was thus bestowed by the overall Chinese Government . . . and the *kasha* was an administrative organ of the overall Chinese government.

Thus the Venerable Shirob sums up history.

No claim of Tibet's independence from China has rallied wide support from the Tibetan people or rec-

ognition by any foreign power, in the past seven hundred years.

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Tibet's modern history dates from May 23, 1951, when the Dalai Lama signed with Peking the Agreement of Seventeen Articles, which affirmed Tibet's long existence "within the boundaries of China" and her present "return to the motherland". Whatever uncertainties may have clouded China's title from the period of British penetration or the warlord conflicts between Tibetan and Szechuan warlords were dispelled by that agreement. The nature of Tibet's "autonomy" was also made clear.

Whatever the Dalai Lama later said about it, he needed that agreement for his own status, as much as Peking needed it for the unification of China. Even in the days when China was weak, and Japan held most of her territory, Tibet had sought sanctions from the Kuomintang. And now that the Chinese People's Republic proclaimed in October 1949, was showing the strength to unify the China that had fallen apart with the empire, Tibet must define its relations or face civil war. Britain had stated that Tibet was part of China. America, through Lowell Thomas, had promoted the idea of "independence" but would "give no guarantee"[1].

[1]Stated in Thomas' book on his 1949 trip to Tibet, and more openly in his letter to the *kasha* May 1950, in which he reported that President Truman would not commit himself to send arms and military aid. Letter on exhibit in Peking seen by author.

So, in February 1950, the Dalai Lama being fifteen and his regent pro-British, his ministers argued and split, and decided to send a mission to Peking to see what terms were offered. The mission went via India and was stalled in New Delhi for reasons we need not discuss. The young Dalai Lama was taken to Yatung near the Indian border, to be ready to slip into India at need. Meantime Apei, commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army, was sent eastward to Chamdo, a month's journey towards Szechuan, to meet the People's Liberation Army's expected advance.

Chamdo had been for years disputed territory. Tibetan in population and claimed by Tibet, it was mapped by Chiang Kai-shek as part of a new province called Sikang, between Tibet and Szechuan. Chiang had never subdued it; Tibetan warlords had taken it from Szechuan warlords but were themselves in conflict with Chamdo's local nobles. In Chamdo in October 1950, the People's Liberation Army, moving out to unify the ends of China, met the Tibetan Army under Apei and roundly defeated it in a two-day battle, part of the Tibetans going over to the PLA. Smaller Tibetan detachments, in areas around Chamdo, fraternized with the PLA on sight without combat. The PLA did not pursue its victory into Tibet proper but encamped near Chamdo for eight months to await the conference which would come.

Apei, commander-in-chief, expected death as the result of his defeat. The PLA treated him well and gave him long lectures on the New China's policy to-

wards national minorities. Apei liked what he heard and thought it worth reporting by messenger to the Dalai Lama in Yatung at the other end of Tibet.

In Yatung the Dalai Lama and his ministers, still discussing future action, were in contact with agents of foreign powers, especially British and American. Later in Peking the Dalai Lama told people that the Americans wanted him to take refuge in India and declare holy war against the Chinese Communists, which America would then finance. The British advised him to return to Lhasa, as the only place where he had power. They gave as reason: "The Dalai Lama is like a snow man, that melts when the snow goes; in Lhasa he has power but outside Tibet he will melt". I have this at second-hand but it sounds plausible.

The battle of Chamdo ended these discussions. Hearing that the battle was lost but that Peking seemed to offer good terms to national minorities, the Dalai Lama ordered Apei to proceed at once to Peking and negotiate an agreement. Two others went with Apei from Chamdo, two more came to Peking from the delegation stalled so long in India. Apei was chief of the mission.

"I reached Peking in April 1951," Apei told me later. "It was my first trip to Peking but I already knew something of the new policies. Negotiations went fast in a friendly atmosphere. We signed the agreement May 23, 1951. Early in June I started back to Lhasa which I reached in late August by horse. I reported at once to the Dalai Lama who had returned

from Yatung. Then I reported to all officials of the local government, both clerical and lay. The agreement was accepted unanimously."

The Dalai Lama had returned to Lhasa because the news of the agreement had reached him in Yatung. After receiving Apei's full report and after nearly two months' discussion with all Tibet's top officials, he wired to Mao Tse-tung his ratification which contained the following words:

> The delegates of both parties on a friendly basis signed an agreement for the peaceful liberation of Tibet. The Tibetan local government and the monks and people of Tibetan nationality are giving the agreement unanimous support. They are actively helping the People's Liberation Army units marching into Tibet to strengthen the national defense . . . and safeguard the unification and territorial sovereignty of the motherland.

It is clear from this brief survey that the take-over of Tibet by the People's Liberation Army in 1951 was not an "invasion", as commonly held abroad. Chinese would not in any case consider it an invasion, since they hold Tibet to be an integral part of China. But, even within China, the PLA waited in Chamdo, then part of Sikang province, until the agreement was signed with Tibet's local government, which recognized the PLA as the "national army". Eight years later, the Dalai Lama, after he fled to India, said the agreement had been "imposed at the point of a

bayonet". That it followed the defeat of the Tibetan Army in Chamdo was true. But after that defeat, the victorious PLA had waited eight months to secure the unanimous consent of the Dalai Lama and the *kasha* and the "monks and people", and the Dalai Lama had wired the "active help" of all Tibetans to the PLA. To call such an agreement "imposed by the bayonet" is not the common use of words.

A reading of the agreement settles certain questions about "sovereignty" and "autonomy". Tibet recognized its inclusion "in the motherland" of China and accepted the new Peking government as its central government. Peking recognized and defined Tibet's "autonomy". This is important because "autonomy" has many shades of meaning. Britain, followed in this by India, sought to define "autonomy" as a type of "independence" which might permit privileges to foreign powers. The 1951 agreement defined it as "regional national autonomy . . . under the leadership of the central government and in accordance with the policy laid down in the Common Program". As already carried out in other autonomous regions in China — Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Kwangsi — an "autonomous region" has its own language, customs, religion, and elects its local government for local affairs, and its deputies to the National People's Congress of China to handle national affairs. The "Common Program" is a program for socialism. Such autonomy is not "independence",

nor a condition that permits the intervention of foreign powers.

Some local rights were defined in the agreement. Peking agreed "not to abolish the existing political structure" nor "the powers of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni" nor "the income of the monasteries", and not "to use compulsion for reform". Tibet's local government, through the Dalai Lama and the *kasha*, agreed to move towards the reform of serfdom, at their own speed and in their own manner. They specifically agreed to incorporate the Tibetan Army into the People's Liberation Army, but this was never done.

Did Peking keep the agreement? Did the local government of Tibet keep it?

The Dalai Lama, speaking in 1959 from India, told the world that the 1951 agreement had been "imposed on an unwilling Tibet" and violated at once by Peking. He listed no concrete violations, and a thorough documentation would seem needed to overcome the extravagant compliments which the same Dalai Lama had showered upon that agreement and Peking's actions for the previous eight years. Again and again on national days and other anniversaries he hailed "the fairness and friendliness" of the agreement. He told the People's Liberation Army[1] that its units "had respected religious practise, customs and habits with total fidelity" and that the Tibetan people "ardently

[1]1954 Army Day message.

love the armed forces". He wrote in the press: "The Tibetan people have enjoyed ample rights of freedom and equality."[1] In 1954, on his visit to Peking, he had composed a "Hymn to Mao Tse-tung" in his own handwriting and presented it to the Temple of Broad Charity where it still hangs framed in the holiest room, opposite the sacred "Buddha Tooth". In it he compared Mao's "brilliance and deeds" to those of "Brahma, creator of the world" with two score equally extravagant lines. So, either the Dalai Lama was telling lies for eight years for reasons of policy, or, as I think more likely, was conditioned from babyhood to echo the thoughts of his "advisers" and has now changed "advisers". (Further account will be given in the next chapter, in connection with the Dalai Lama's flight.)

The Panchen Erdeni and Apei and all others I met in Tibet, said that Peking scrupulously kept the agreement but the *kasha* did not.

"The power of the local government remained as before," Apei told me. "Officials at all levels kept their posts. No damage was done to any monastery in the Tibet region."[2]

In 1955, in response to Tibetan requests, the National Congress of China abolished the province of Sikang — that disputed area where the battle of

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[1] Oct. 1, 1958.

[2] This referred to the time before the March rebellion. Some monasteries were damaged during battle but later repaired by Peking.

Chamdo had taken place — and agreed to include Chamdo in Tibet. It was not transferred to the rule of the *kasha,* — for to this the nobles and people of Chamdo would have objected — but preparations were begun for the organizing of a larger, more unified Tibet than had existed at any previous time in the century. In 1956 there was set up the "Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region", with the Dalai Lama as chairman, the Panchen Erdeni as first vice-chairman, a Living Buddha from Chamdo as second vice-chairman, and with fifty-five members, representing all areas in Tibet. A fine building was erected in Lhasa for the Preparatory Committee's work. While this Committee had in it the potential of a larger and more unified Tibet, yet, due to the sabotage of the *kasha,* which would naturally be superseded in the enlarged Tibet, the work of the Committee did not advance.

The Panchen Erdeni listed for me the many improvements which Peking had brought in the life of Tibet. He noted, as did others, the three great highways built between 1954 and 1957 which united Tibet with other provinces of China, with Szechuan, Chinghai and Sinkiang. These advantaged all China by better connections, but especially advantaged Tibet because the better transport cut in half the cost of consumer goods like textiles and tea. Apei told me that Peking "paid high" for the privately owned land needed for roads, "which was never done in Tibet before". Peasants told me that the PLA "paid good

wages" for road-building, whereas such work formerly was done by unpaid forced labor of serfs. Ex-serfs told me they had been able to buy a sheep or even a draft animal from the wages on the roads.

"All reform was held back by the *kasha*," said the Panchen, "and yet there was considerable change." He noted the power-plants that gave electricity to Lhasa and Shigatse, the new hospitals, schools, experimental farms, the seed loans without interest to peasants, the gifts of thousands of improved farm tools. He admitted that these reforms ran into difficulty from the *kasha's* unwillingness to sell land for experimental farms, and from rumors inspired against the Han hospitals and schools. The seed grain, handled through the nobles, was sometimes kept by them, and old grain from the bottom of the storage sheds substituted. New farm tools were sometimes set aside in warehouses, on the pretext that "iron poisons the soil".

"The economic and social system did not change", said the Panchen. "Serfdom continued as before." All reforms were therefore delayed or corrupted, by the serf-owners acting through the local government of Tibet.

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The system of serfdom that existed in Tibet for centuries will be seen in greater detail in following chapters. But to understand the forces in conflict during the eight years after the 1951 agreement,

which finally produced in 1959 the March rebellion, the economic and social base of Tibet must be briefly sketched.

Tibet, when Chamdo was added, had an area of some 1,200,000 square kilometers and a population of 1,200,000, one person to a square kilometer. Three fourths of the population lived in the southern one fourth of the area; their basic occupation was agriculture. The remaining one quarter of the people lived in the pasture areas which are mainly in the northern areas; their occupation was livestock. Monks and nuns numbered some 120,000,[1] one tenth of the population, but since monks were far more numerous than nuns, they formed not far from one fifth of the males.

For centuries the population has consisted of two basic classes: the nobles and the serfs. In Lhasa they estimated that some two percent of the people were in the upper strata, and an additional three percent were their immediate agents, overseers, stewards, managers of estates and private armies. Ninety percent of the people were serfs, tied to the land, while five percent were slaves, persons handled as chattels.

The middle class was practically non-existent. Small merchants and handicraftsmen were serfs, who worked for their lords or paid a tax to their lords for permission to engage in trade or handicraft. Big merchants, those who monopolized foreign trade, came from noble families and from upper lamas in

[1]Figure given in Lhasa. Previous estimates were higher.

the monasteries. Even in the monasteries the division between nobles and serfs continued. Sons of the upper class who entered the monasteries had houses of their own which their families owned inside the monasteries; they became monastery chiefs. Sons of serfs remained, as was stated in the debates on reform, "slaves in a monk's robe".

All land in Tibet and most of the livestock belonged to the nobility. Some 24.3 percent of the land was owned directly by noble families, 36.8 percent by the monasteries which the nobles ruled, and the remaining 38.9 percent by the feudal government, which gave it over to exploitation by government officials or nobles, as perquisite for holding posts in government.

All power was in the hands of the nobles, and particularly, in the hands of the biggest serf-owners. These furnished the six *kaloons* who made up the *kasha*, the secular council of ministers; they also furnished abbots and high dignitaries for the monasteries. Government was highly complicated, a mixture of clerical and lay rule. Decrees of the *kasha* became valid only when stamped by the seal of the Dalai Lama's secretariat, a clerical body. Every government post was filled by two persons, a clerical and a lay, and of these the clerical had precedence.

The Dalai Lama, set up as god and king, was a symbol around whom and through whom the biggest serf-owners struggled for power. From babyhood he was conditioned to worship by the people, but the upper class directed all his acts through the hierarchy,

which imposed the routine of prayers and scripture readings and public appearances which filled his days, and even did him to death on many occasions down the centuries for the sake of some regent's power.

This complicated mechanism of government handled only the affairs of the upper class. Commoners were ruled directly by their masters. Every manor house and monastery had its jail, usually a rough stone cell in a cellar with little light or air and no toilet facilities except the floor. Manors and monasteries had their own whips for flogging, their own torture implements. A master had the right to cut off the hand or foot or gouge out the eyes of a disobedient or runaway serf. There were special instruments for these punishments, and also for ham-stringing or slicing off the heel or otherwise crippling a serf. For a serf even to appeal from his master to any other authority like the *kasha* was itself a punishable crime. Serf-owners were not supposed to kill serfs but if they did, there was nobody to call them to account. "That owners killed serfs was not uncommon," I was told by Nachi, a serf who had run away and who had come eventually to study in Peking.

The class of serfs was complex and disintegrating under changing conditions. One type of serf, the *tsaibas*, were listed in title-deeds of land from the days of the Fifth Dalai Lama; they were tied to the land and had by custom the right to a piece of it, for which they paid by a fixed amount of labor for the master. Another type of serf, the *duichuns*, rented land from

the master, paying for it by a portion of the crop. A third type, the *nantsams*, had no land at all, but slept in the stables and outhouses of the master, as field hands or house servants, indistinguishable from slaves. Some serfs became relatively well off, for serfs might own livestock and 40 percent of the livestock in Tibet was thus owned by commoners. Serfs even owned other serfs and transferred to them some of the labor-duties they owed their masters.

Whatever their type or prosperity, all serfs were subject at all times to the will of their masters. They must get their lord's permission to marry or to leave his estate for even brief absence. Their marriage might be broken by arbitrary transfer of one partner to another estate. Serfs with land "rights" might be degraded to slaves, or the reverse might happen, according to the owner's wish. Custom demanded that such changes be grounded in some reason, but no law compelled the owner's acts. A serf who showed diligence and special ability might be raised to become a steward or overseer, but was equally likely to find his newly acquired wealth in livestock seized by his master on some pretext and his family beggared. It was not safe for a serf to appear prosperous.

Serfs ran away with some frequency. They were often caught and returned to their masters by the armed retainers. Anything then might happen to them, up to torture, maiming or death. If they escaped to a distant part of Tibet they found it necessary to seek a new master in order to survive. Many *duichuns* were

of this type; often they regularized their position and acquired safety by paying a tax to their original owner for the right to live and be exploited in the new place.

"You could not live in Tibet without a master," many of the former serfs told me. "Anyone might pick you up as an outlaw unless you had a legal owner."

Such was the kind of society that in March 1951 "unanimously agreed" to move towards socialism, under the leadership of Peking!

IV. THE MARCH REBELLION

When rebellion against China flamed in Lhasa in mid-March of 1959 and the defeated rebels fled to India taking with them the Dalai Lama, the world press handled it as a ruthless suppression of Tibet. An overwhelming Chinese army was pictured — one newspaper ran it up to several hundred thousand — massacring the Tibetan nation, with "fifty thousand armed men in a man-hunt for the god-king" across the Tibetan wilds.

Even before I left Peking I knew that this was nonsense. Apei had told me that no attempt whatever had been made to detain the Dalai Lama, since "to try to take him from armed rebels would have endangered his life". This was borne out by the complete indifference shown in Peking at his departure to India; it seemed to be felt that his absence would make easier the coming reforms.

In Lhasa we learned that the total number of armed rebels had been estimated at about 20,000, mostly concentrated in Lhasa and Loka, and that the total PLA force in those parts of Tibet where rebellion occurred had been some 5,000 men. Specifically, in Lhasa itself there had been only ten companies of PLA infan-

try, two of which were kept throughout on reserve, and one artillery regiment, and indication of some fifteen hundred men. These had been enough to put down some 7,000 armed rebels in forty-seven hours.

Casualty statistics were unavailable but the "wholesale slaughter" in the Western press had left in August just sixty wounded rebels in the Lhasa General Hospital, which had handled all rebel casualties except those that could walk home from field clinics. Later, in a private dinner with army chiefs, I was told that rebel casualties, both killed and wounded, might have reached six hundred in Lhasa. The figure seemed borne out by the general appearance of the city, where a few buildings, damaged in battle, were being repaired; by the brisk appearance of citizens, who referred to men killed in battle as special individuals, not as masses; and by the mood of joyous harvest everywhere.

The victory was far greater in importance for the future than the size of battles or casualties indicates. When four of the six *kaloons*, who composed the *kasha,* Tibet's local government, led rebellion and later fled into India, they freed Peking from the 1951 pledge to leave the political structure of Tibet unchanged. When seventy percent of Tibet's 642 noble families and 2,136 monasteries joined the rebel forces, yet proved unable to enlist more than 20,000 rebels, half of whom were obviously unwilling, the dominance of Tibet's ruling class over the souls of Tibetans was broken. Thus the rebellion, and its defeat, with the

dispersal of the leading serf-owners and their flight into India, opened the way to the quick abolition of serfdom. The suppression in Lhasa of what was hardly more than a large scale riot, became a watershed in history between a thousand years of serf society and a future in which Tibet proceeds towards socialism.

The rebellion was thus seen to be no "national conflict", but an uprising by serf-owners who were unable to mobilize followers. But if it failed to become a civil war, even dragging in finally the intervention of foreign powers, as the rebels clearly intended, in a war to separate Tibet from China, this was because Peking's strategy was based not only on arms, but on careful political planning, and especially because in the eight years after the 1951 Agreement, Peking had built support among the people of Tibet.

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When the serf-owning rulers of a society in which serfdom had been the way of life for a thousand years, agreed in 1951 to move towards socialism under the leadership of Peking, the stage was clearly set for a long struggle. This must have been known to both sides from the start. Yet Peking's Communists and Tibet's serf-owners both signed that 1951 Agreement, and the Dalai Lama wired Mao Tse-tung that Tibet's "officials, monks and people", were giving it unanimous support. Both sides had reason for postponing struggle, both counted on the changes time might be made to bring.

Tibet's ruling nobles, knowing their army defeated in Chamdo, gained through the Agreement continued control of Tibet's local government, for Peking pledged to "leave unchanged the political structure, the powers of the Dalai Lama, the income of the monasteries" and not to "use compulsion for reform". They counted on preventing or delaying reform through their control of Tibet's government, monasteries and people, whom they owned, body and soul, as serfs. They played for time in which Peking's policies might change or be corrupted, or foreign powers might act against China or might at least give aid and arms to rebellion in Tibet. They began at once to work for this.

Peking also needed time. The People's Liberation Army had beaten the Tibetan Army but had not "won Tibet". It had won from Tibet's local government the recognition that Tibet was part of "the motherland of China", and the right to place the PLA in frontier posts towards India and Nepal as "the national army". This was the first essential at the time, for in 1951 American troops were fighting Chinese in Korea and off Taiwan and threatening to fight in Indo-China, while Washington was raising the question of "Tibet's independence" as Britain had done for decades, as a means of detaching Tibet from China. The immediate need was to secure China's territorial sovereignty with Tibetan support. For this Peking postponed reforms in Tibet for an indefinite number of years, while binding the Tibetan nobles to eventual reform.

Peking knew that the serf-owning nobles hated the idea of any reform of serfdom, and hardly dreamed what socialism was; that even the serfs, hungry and tortured as they might be, were bound in soul by age-old suspicion of the Hans and by a religion which taught that their misery was direct result of their *karma*, a destiny decreed by their sins in a past incarnation, and therefore to be borne with patience in the hope of a better next incarnation. Tibet's serfs dared not sit down in the same room with nobles, nor face them directly on the road; they had no dream of what "freedom" might be. Peking counted on the political and economic measures that would slowly knit Tibet to the rest of China and on winning at least part of the nobles to the knowledge that even for them, serfdom did not offer a good life, and that they might better sell their estates to the central government. Most of all, Peking counted on the changes that would grow in the souls of serfs through contact, even distant, with China's dynamic life.

So, from the very "unanimous acceptance" of the 1951 Agreement, both sides began to prepare for future conflict for the loyalties of the Tibetans. Peking began with the behavior of the People's Liberation Army, with the great highways, that knit Tibet to the motherland of China, not only in a military but in a political and economic sense, with hospitals, schools, experimental farms, seed loans without interest, free gifts of better farm tools to peasants. The serf-owners prepared by anti-Han agitation, by rumors that the hospitals poi-

soned, that the schools endangered the soul, by withholding land from the experimental farms and even from the roads. When these measures failed to halt the slow march of progress, the serf-owners turned to conspiracy and promoted revolts, first in the Tibetan areas of adjoining provinces and finally in Lhasa itself.

Even before the battle of Chamdo, Peking's strategy began with instructions given to the PLA in Szechuan, as they prepared for Tibet. In the strategy of winning hostile or indifferent populations, the PLA has long experience; it was thus that all China was won. In Szechuan in 1950, the PLA troops were instructed, not only in the general attitudes of friendship and equality towards minority nationalities, but in the special ways they must act in Tibet. I was told of this instruction by Captain Yang who went from Szechuan to Lhasa in those years.

"We learned enough of the Tibetan language for first contacts; we learned the polite greetings for different social classes, the proper way to pass shrines on the road and the way to respect the Tibetan religion. We must not enter any religious places, neither the monasteries nor the special rooms or corners in the homes where the religious images are kept". The "hardest discipline" was the absolute prohibition of hunting or fishing anywhere in Tibet. This was hard because food was scarce and transport difficult on the long way, and open hills and rivers were full of game and fish. But the PLA was forbidden this indulgence because the Tibetan religion forbids the killing of

animals, and though Living Buddhas evade this precept, the PLA must not evade.

"This discipline was severe but very useful," said Captain Yang. "Our reputation went ahead of us; we were even called 'the army of Buddhas'. This was one cause why part of the Tibetan Army came over to us in Chamdo, because we respected their beliefs."

The second move in Peking's strategy was the eight months' halt of the PLA in Chamdo, awaiting the 1951 Agreement. For when at last the troops moved into Tibet towards Lhasa, they were able to stop at every populated point on the way and explain that they were the "national army" by agreement of the Dalai Lama with Peking. They behaved with greater consideration towards the people than any army had before, not only in that they abstained from rape and loot, but in that they paid actual money for transport service, which in Tibet was usually done by forced labor, on orders of a government paper. The PLA did not ask, and did not know, whether the money they paid for draft animals and porters actually went to the serfs who did the work, or whether their masters took it. What was important was that the serfs knew the PLA paid money, and the idea of wages became a new idea, undermining the old habit of forced labor.

On reaching Lhasa, the PLA was given a formal banquet by the *kasha*, but underground sabotage against the PLA at once began. Fuel for its cooking was unavailable. When the PLA tried to raise its

own food, the *kasha* made it hard to buy or lease land, though wasteland lay everywhere. By persistence, the PLA secured land of poor quality, and by the third year was able to raise its own vegetables. It never secured enough land to grow all its own grain but imported this with difficulty from other provinces of China.

The third move in Peking's strategy was the building of three great highways, connecting Tibet with the rest of China, militarily, politically and economically. Its advantages for Tibetans have been noted in the previous chapter, the improved communications, the consequent lowering in prices of consumer goods, like tea and textiles, the wages paid to serfs. The schools, hospitals, experimental farms, seed loans and farm implements have also been noted. All these new developments were sabotaged by the *kasha*. The two primary schools in Lhasa never filled up with pupils, the experimental farms had difficulty securing land, the hospitals were beset by rumors that "the Han doctors poison patients", the seed loans were often diverted from the peasants to their masters, the farm implements were put into warehouses on the plea that "iron poisons the soil". Yet despite the slow rate of progress, as the Panchen Erdeni told me, "the consciousness of the people increased".

Open opposition to Peking began in 1953 when a *kaloon* named Lokongwa, led a demand that the PLA and all Hans be expelled from Tibet. The Dalai Lama dismissed Lokongwa and the latter went into India,

where he organized in Kalimpong the foreign contacts for future rebellion, securing air-drops from Chiang Kai-shek and an undisclosed amount of aid from sources in India. In 1954 the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni visited Peking as deputies to the session of the National Congress. They toured various parts of China and the Dalai Lama expressed much pleasure in the "motherland's great achievements". This was the time when he wrote that extravagant "Hymn to Mao Tse-tung", comparing his deeds with those of "Brahma, creator of the world". On his return to Lhasa by the newly built Szechuan-Tibet Highway in early 1955, members of the Dalai Lama's retinue dropped off in west Szechuan and toured the Tibetan monasteries there to organize rebellion.

This "Kanting rebellion" broke in winter of 1955-56, and took the form of murdering central government officials and Han citizens, there being no PLA forces in the area. As soon as any PLA troops arrived, they easily put down the rebels, but these fled into deeper hills and eventually into Chamdo. It was estimated that there were 10,000 armed rebels at the highest point. Arms were easy to get, for at least 50,000 rifles had been left in that area from the warlord battles between Tibetan and Szechuan warlords. The few air-drops from Chiang Kai-shek of American weapons and radio transmitters were hardly needed, except for the sense of foreign support they gave the rebels. The Szechuan-Chamdo rebellion was "basically suppressed" by the end of 1956, though isolated groups

would remain as "bandits" as long as any monastery fed them, until local "people's control" was organized. The bulk of the defeated rebels moved into Tibet and lived by looting the peasants and by connivance of the *kasha* until they joined the Lhasa rebellion. They were the Khampas, or Sikang troops, cavalry, wild, undisciplined, accustomed to living by loot.

A later, smaller rebellion broke out in spring of 1958 in the Tibetan areas of Chinghai and Kansu, led by monasteries and pasture lords against the "democratic reform" in the pastures. At this stage, the "democratic reform" went no further than reducing the excessive land rents and usury charged by the monasteries, and removing the monasteries' right to maintain courts and jails. After the rebellion was suppressed, the "democratic reform" went further, giving "freedom of person" to lamas, whereupon a fairly large part of the lamas left the monasteries and went home to take up land.

As these revolts were suppressed, documents were found that showed them to have been inspired from Lhasa and organized through the monasteries as a "holy war" against Communism. Printed curses against the Chinese Communists, found on dead rebels and behind Buddha pictures in monasteries, connected the rebellion with printing facilities in India. An organization emerged called the "Four Rivers and Six Ranges". When located in Lhasa, it claimed to be a fund-raising appeal for the Dalai Lama; it was later

found to be the organ of terrorism and sabotage and air-drops for rebellion in Tibet.

Rebellion moved in 1958 into Tibet proper. Air-drops of American weapons began in Loka, a large area southeast of Lhasa known as "the granary of Tibet" whose long border with India facilitated foreign contacts and whose food supply gave rations for armed forces. Armed rebels from Loka, including Khampas, began raiding the PLA transport of lumber, which was being brought to build a new power-plant in Lhasa. Complaints also poured into the PLA headquarters that the rebels were terrorizing, looting and raping the Tibetan people.

"All such complaints were referred to the *kasha,* which was the government of Tibet, responsible for local law and order", I was told by all PLA officers. "The *kasha* always agreed to handle them, but actually was conniving with the rebels".

This scrupulous respect for the *kasha* was taken by Tibet's upper class as a sign of Peking's weakness. In February 1959 when pilgrims from all Tibet began pouring into Lhasa for the Great Prayer Festival, the Monlam, which lasts three weeks and begins the Tibetan New Year, the provocations grew bolder. A member of the *kasha* demanded the right to occupy the State Trading Office of the central government. When this was refused, the Tibetan Army set up machine-guns, trained on the Communist Party headquarters. Thus the stage was set for the launching of open rebellion.

It began March 10th in the morning. The Dalai Lama had fixed that date to attend a theatrical performance at the Military Area Command of the PLA. Camera-men, tape-recorders and leading functionaries waited outside the auditorium for the honored guest, and a water-cart sprinkled the road to lay the dust for the Dalai Lama's car. He failed to appear but a radio-mechanic came running to stammer: "Reactionaries are holding the Dalai Lama in his summer palace in Jewel Park. They are killing progressives. People who live near the Park are in panic, seeking a place to hide."

Down the road came armed, mounted Tibetans, leading a horse on whose back had been thrown the bloody corpse of a prominent progressive noble, exposed to terrify the people. A Tibetan employee in the Central Government offices sprang to a sub-machine-gun, shouting: "We cannot endure this lawlessness. I will fight".

"We have no orders yet", said a Han, restraining his Tibetan comrade with difficulty. This set the tone of disciplined restraint which was to last for ten days more.

A meeting of leading rebels, from the *kasha* and the three big monasteries, held on the 10th in Jewel Park, declared Tibet's independence from China, and wired the announcement to Kalimpong, India, asking that the news be spread. Then for ten days the terror built up in Lhasa. The rebels went around conscripting men into their army under pain of death. They dug

fortifications in parks and on the hills. They demolished the mosque in Lhasa in a nationalist frenzy against Moslems. On the 15th came the report that the rebels had raped all the nuns in a nunnery near Jokhan. Other reports of atrocities poured into the PLA and the PLA kept referred them to the *kasha*, demanding that the *kasha* act to restore order.

The People's Liberation Army itself remained in barracks, closing its compound gate. Inside the barracks, it made dugouts, awaiting orders from Peking. The various civilian offices of the central government in nine or ten different places — the state trade, the transport company, the postoffice, the bank, the school and hospital, the working committee of the Communist Party, all closed the gates of their walled compounds and began making dugouts in their yards. None of the civilians asked for help from the troops or sought refuge with the PLA; they had weapons and training sufficient for the first defense of their compound walls. Their Tibetan employees, however, asked permission to bring their families into the compounds from the city, where the rebels raged through the streets. This was granted and the Tibetan employees with their families camped in the auditorium and the office buildings.

On the 16th a news-photographer went around in an armed car and took photographs of rebel demonstrations and the fortifications they were digging. He also got pictures of a man whose eyes had been gouged out by the rebels because he had helped the PLA transport,

and another whose nose was cut off for the same reason. These were on stretchers, being taken to hospital. In general, the hospital was closed for the out-patients, who usually numbered 700 to 1,000 daily at this period, had stopped coming. They could not have got through the rebel-held streets.

During these days three letters were sent by General Tan Kuan-san of the Military Area Command to the Dalai Lama in his summer palace and three letters were sent from the Dalai Lama in reply to General Tan Kuan-san. The first letter was carried by Living Buddha Jaltsolin, the Dalai Lama's reader. He reached the Dalai Lama but was then imprisoned by the rebels in the Jewel Park. The remaining letters were handled by Apei, in contact with different lamas in attendance on the Dalai Lama; they were later acknowledged by the Dalai Lama in India. The letters showed plainly that the Dalai Lama was detained in Jewel Park by the rebels against his will and that he was in anger and distress and indecision, sometimes expecting to "bring the reactionaries to order" by his speeches sometimes proposing to "come in secret" to General Tan, "as soon as I have people I can trust". People who saw the Dalai Lama during those days of confinement, later reported that he argued with the rebels, refused to go to India, and for a time refused to eat so that some people feared he might die.

On the 18th word came that the Dalai Lama had left Lhasa. "The rebels kidnapped him last night", it was said. The exact conditions in which he left are

still a mystery, but it is known that he remained for several days in Loka with the rebels, and after the rebels were defeated in Lhasa, he left with them for India. Later in India, he said that he came of his own free will. Whether he was throughout the leader of rebellion, as Nehru, in receiving him, seemed to assume, and the letters he sent to General Tan were deliberate deceit, or whether, as seems to me more likely, he wavered, hoping at times that his god-head might reconcile the irreconcilable, and then yielding to the duress of men and circumstance on the road to India — cannot be known by outsiders, and perhaps not even by the Dalai Lama himself. He left Lhasa before the battle was joined and did not return.

From India in following months several anti-China statements were issued in the Dalai Lama's name, either by his entourage of reactionary serf-owners or by his older brothers, whose connections with Washington and Taiwan were hardly concealed, but some in the presence of the Dalai Lama himself. Of these the strongest was the June 30th statement, handed out as a press release in English to world reporters in the Dalai Lama's presence. It denounced every act of Peking towards Tibet from the 1951 Agreement to the present, demanded an independent and "Greater Tibet", and refused even to deal with Peking directly, since he would not trust Peking's word, but would only deal through a third power, presumably India. It was so extreme that Western commentators said the Dalai

Lama had chosen to "slam the door" against possible return to Tibet.

Peking's only response was to publish the charges, side by side with the dozens of very laudatory statements which the Dalai Lama had issued regarding China's policy in the past eight years. Peking's official policy remained that the Dalai Lama is now making many regrettably false statements, but is in the hands of such an evil clique that both his sources of information and his actions are controlled. This was the view expressed by the Panchen Erdeni to our correspondents' group in Shigatse in August 1959; it was also the position taken by Premier Chou En-lai in a press conference in Nepal in May 1960. At present writing, June 1960, Peking has not deprived the Dalai Lama of his post as titular head of Tibet's local government, nor of his palaces and offices, nor of his vice-chairmanship in the Standing Committee of China's government. But his once great prestige has faded rapidly in Tibet. How far he was a leader and how far a puppet in the actual Lhasa rebellion is still a matter for debate.

The puzzle to me was not so much the Dalai Lama's action as the fact that the People's Liberation Army remained in its quarters for ten days from March 10th to 20th while the rebels raged through Lhasa, conscripting men under threat of death, raping, murdering, blinding. When I asked PLA men, as I did several times, the reply was always the same: "The *kasha* was still the lawful government and the people of

Lhasa had not yet taken sides. In such situations our strategy is always never to start or develop the fighting but let the enemy start it and continue it until it is fully clear to all people who are the aggressors and the destroyers of law. Then, when we counter-attack, we have the people with us; their support shortens the fighting and lessens the casualties in the end. The rebels lost the people of Lhasa in those ten days".

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The rebel artillery began their all-out attack at 3.40 a.m. before dawn on March 20th. Bursts of fire came from Potala Palace, from Jewel Park, from Yo Wang Hill, the highest point in Lhasa. At once the whole city resounded with rifle and artillery fire. In all the compounds of the Hans the people awoke and remained awake till dawn. Rebels charged the walls of the compounds of the Transport Company and the Working Committee; they were repelled. Elsewhere the attack was only by artillery, and the people found refuge in the dugouts. Tibetan employees were saying: "When do we counter-attack? Is our artillery asleep?" One of the Han editors wrote in his diary before dawn: "The reactionary clique has finally chosen the road to self-destruction".

At 10 a.m.,[1] on orders from Peking, the People's Liberation Army went into counter-attack, in assault by a single company straight up Yo Wang Hill. This

[1] 10 a.m. Peking time; about 8 a.m. by Lhasa sun-time.

was the steepest and highest hill in Lhasa; the rebels had trenches and artillery on the sides and the top, and covering artillery from Potala Palace. By 1.30 p.m., Yo Wang Hill was taken. Only a few rebels were here killed or captured; most of them ran away beyond the hill. The taking of this height by a single company was the fiercest fight in the entire conflict and it gave the PLA command of Lhasa. Members of the company told me how they went up.

Said Fu Lo-min: "I was squad leader in the first platoon. I dashed up with three men to take a house where the rebels had a machine-gun nest. The hill was very steep but in eight minutes we got on the roof, all four with automatics. Here I was hit in the leg by a bullet but continued to give command till other units stormed up and covered our advance. After we got on the roof we seized the machine-gun. It was British-made. The rebels threw away arms on the hill and ran. Most of the ones we met seemed to have been coerced." Fu gave as reason for the quick victory "good direction from our commanders, good support from the Tibetan people. They were coming right behind us bringing us food."

Chang, of the heavy machine-gun platoon, said: "Our task was to cover the units that took the hill. A heavy machine-gun is a strong force and with it we wiped out strong rebel points. At first we fired from the foot of the hill but after the hill was taken we went to the top to hold it. The local Tibetan people en-

couraged us and helped carry our equipment up to wipe out the bandits".

From Yo Wang Hill the PLA dominated Jewel Park where the main force of 3,000 rebels was encamped. New companies now moved on Jewel Park and took it by seven that evening. Here the greater part of the rebels were captured; only a few were killed or got away. As twilight fell, the PLA posted a few troops to hold Yo Wang Hill and Jewel Park and moved the bulk of its forces to surround the city of Lhasa for the night.

All day on the 21st, the PLA cleaned up rebel groups in Lhasa. Some surrendered quickly, some ran away and hid in people's houses, only a few fought hard. The hardest fighting of that day was at Ramogia Monastery which the rebels had turned into a fort. The PLA sent a small group into Ramogia for parley; the rebels killed some of them. After that the fighting was fierce. Ramogia was taken in a few hours, with some damage done to its front wall and a corner of roof.

By nightfall the only rebels holding out were in Potala and Jokhan. So the PLA went over to a political campaign. The two *kaloons* who had remained loyal, Apei and Sampo Tsewang-rentzen, went with megaphones to call upon the rebels to surrender. If they surrendered, their lives were guaranteed. The rebels talked it over all night and came out at nine in the morning with hands in air. The camera-men were waiting to take pictures of the surrender.

Thus Lhasa was cleared of rebellion in forty-seven hours. "For the next two weeks", we were told by the army chiefs in Lhasa, "our troops fanned out around Lhasa for thirty miles, cleaning up rebels in the hills. Meantime the people of Lhasa, who had seen that we did not kill captives, were turning over to us the rebels who hid in the houses and whom they induced to surrender. By April 5th we had liquidated 5,600 rebel troops, some of them killed but most of them captured. We estimated that 1,400 had run away. We captured 79 artillery pieces with 20,000 shells, and 10,395 rifles with ten million rounds of ammunition! Weapons were from all countries, Britain, America, France, even old arms from Tsarist Russia".

The *kasha* was still recognized until March 28th as the lawful local government of Tibet, though four of its six members had led rebellion, and three of them had taken the Dalai Lama from Lhasa. It might still have been possible, after the rebel defeat, for the three *kaloons* to return with the Dalai Lama, state that they had only taken him out of the fighting, and make their peace with Peking. When they chose instead to proceed into India, the State Council in Peking abolished the local government of Tibet on March 28th, — two days before it would have been in India, issuing decrees from a foreign land, — and instructed the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region to take over its powers. Since this Committee had been formed in 1956, amid universal acclaim, for that very purpose, and the two loyal *kaloons* were among

its members, the functions of government were continuous without a break.

The Dalai Lama, as chairman of the Preparatory Committee, remained titular head of Tibet even in absence. The Panchen Erdeni, as first Vice-President, was asked to become Acting Chairman, "until the Dalai Lama's return." The Panchen accepted by wire from his seat in Shigatse which no breath of rebellion had touched. He arrived in Lhasa by car on April 5th in the afternoon, was welcomed by dignitaries of army, state and religion and conducted to a "new palace" in Shirtsit Park, while the populace burned pine needles and prostrated themselves as he passed. The palaces of the Dalai Lama, the Potala and Jewel Park, which two weeks earlier had housed the rebels, lay empty in the sun.

To the people of Lhasa, the Panchen Erdeni in his new palace meant the return of order and peace. A week of whirlwind recognition followed: a banquet on the 6th by military and political personages; ceremonial visits on the 7th, to Jokhan and Ramogia Monasteries where the Panchen worshipped and recited sutras in each monastery with two Living Buddhas as attendants; and told the assembled lamas that the central government "has always respected religion in Tibet and always will". On the 8th he presided at the opening session of the Preparatory Committee as the new local government, and declared that "all nationalities in the motherland must take the road to socialism and carry out reforms". Next morning the Panchen Erdeni

left by plane for Lanchow and thence to Peking as the head of the Tibetan delegation to the National People's Congress of China.

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The People's Liberation Army now moved from Lhasa out into Tibet, to put down rebels in the name not only of the government of China, but also in the name of Tibet's new local government which, under the Panchen Erdeni, had declared for reform. Wherever the troops now went, they confiscated the great whips and torture instruments from the monasteries and manor-houses, and turned them into the county governments under military control. They announced that, on all the lands of the rebels, the harvest this year would go to those who sowed it, without rent or taxes. This was an emergency measure to promote the sowing but, as Apei told me: "It is the kind of measure from which one does not retreat". The PLA was giving out seed grain in quantities to peasants the rebels had looted.

On April 7th and 8th, the PLA crossed the Tsangpo River southeast of Lhasa, and moved into Loka, the rebel's main base. This great rectangle of grain land, with its sixteen supply routes into India and Bhutan, its air-drop in the center, and the wide, swift river guarding the north, was designed by the rebels as their "new capital", to supply a long guerrilla war all over Tibet. The rebel forces here were later found to have been some 12,000, almost twice as many as in Lhasa.

The PLA forces here fought forty-seven engagements in two weeks, disposed of two thousand rebels — some killed, some wounded, but most of them captured — and occupied the four main towns.

An incident of that period shows the nature of the rebel forces. There were many high marches through mountains, and most of the PLA troops had frozen or blistered feet. Corporal Chou and Private Yen, falling behind their detachment because of bad feet, encountered a force of a hundred rebels. They took good positions with one sub-machine-gun, one rifle and some grenades. As the rebels advanced, the two men shot and killed three leaders and wounded another; on this the remaining ninety-six surrendered under a lesser leader, and turned over 90 horses, 29 rifles, 14 muskets and 76 swords, for which the PLA men figured they had "expended 26 sub-machine-gun bullets". The PLA men ordered them to load the weapons on the horses and then went off with the horses and two captives to lead them, to find their detachment, leaving the other ninety-four captives to await their return, under command of the leader who had surrendered. By dawn they caught up with their detachment, reported the battle, turned over the booty. Other PLA men then went back with the two captives and found the ninety-four rebel prisoners, who had been waiting all night. This episode, with its mixed of weapons, its totally passive rank and file, waiting for someone to lead them and feed them, indicates the morale of the conscripted serfs.

At the end of April, the PLA began the second phase of the Loka campaign, a political and military struggle combined. Notices were posted in the towns and meetings were held among the people, announcing that no captured rebels would be killed, that those who surrendered voluntarily would not even be imprisoned nor accused in public meetings of past misdeeds and rewards would be given for "meritorious deeds" in restoring order. The leader of the ninety-six who had surrendered was given a reward of one hundred yuan for "saving the cost of a battle". The townspeople and the peasants and the captured rebels themselves were urged to go into the hills and find the other rebels and induce them to surrender.

Fathers went to bring back sons, wives to bring back husbands, peasants to round up groups of neighbors whom they now saw as "deceived". The task was not without danger for rebels in the hills might shoot first without parley or might seize and torture the emissaries. But the local people knew their way around and had many successes; to them it had become a matter bringing home peasants who might otherwise become bandits. Thus a captured rebel company commander named Lobsam, now working for the PLA, went into the hills and brought over a leading rebel chief with 43 men. In another place seven hundred local people joined the PLA in a search of the hills. Among them was a woman of seventy, who said: "When you people come so far to help us clean up bandits, then everyone must help". In a place called

Lajali, a girl tending sheep was approached by two rebels who asked her for "news of the PLA". When she replied that there were many PLA and they did not kill prisoners, the men asked her to lead them to the PLA. One of them then turned over a rifle and the other a sword. Within a month three thousand more rebels had been disbanded with the aid of the local people.

In reporting the campaign, the PLA estimated that there had been 12,000 armed rebels in Loka, of whom 2,000 had been disbanded in the first part of the campaign and 3,000 in the second, and the remaining 7,000 had fled into India, taking with them many relatives, servants and also the peasants on the border whom they conscripted as transport service.

"The rebellion", they analyzed, "was not a fight for nationalism or religion, but a fight of serf-owners to continue serfdom. Only the leaders fought hard; of the rebels in the ranks, about eighty percent had been coerced or deceived. There was conflict within the rebel ranks, between the people of Tibet and the Khampas, between the lamas and the Tibetan army; these conflicts even reached armed clashes. The rebel ranks had thus so little morale or unity that, when a few leaders were killed or captured, at a little explanation the ranks fell apart."

A thousand PLA men now went in twenty groups to organize the peasants who were technically still serfs, and to prepare them for the coming reform. The first "law and order" groups to round up outlaws, were

expanded into "Peasant Associations" to enforce the "three abolitions" and eventually, to organize township and county government. For by this time the Panchen Erdeni and the other Tibetan deputies were returning from Peking, and the second session of the Preparatory Committee was under way.

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When the Panchen Erdeni left Lhasa for Peking in early April, the medical teams were helping the wounded and the women the rebels had raped, the PLA in Lhasa was distributing seed grain to peasants the rebels had looted, and other PLA forces were crossing the Tsangpo to begin the Loka campaign. When the Panchen returned to Lhasa in mid-June, the people were working peacefully and the fields were green with new grain. Primary schools were growing swiftly; when the schools organized by the central government proved insufficient, the people of Lhasa themselves set up twenty-three "special schools" in which all ages came to study side by side.

For two months various groups of the PLA and the Preparatory Committee and Working Committee, had been touring Tibet on various errands, and also collecting informations, opinions and demands from the people. Everywhere the people were asking: "When will the reform begin?" Everywhere they knew that the confiscation of the whips and torture implements was only the first symbol, the promise of harvest to the tiller only the first pledge. The abolition

of serfdom by law was awaited. Serfs and household and field slaves were coming to the various offices, asking: "How shall we set about the reform?" Members of the upper strata also were coming, volunteering to be the first to carry out the reform on their manors. People's county governments had been organized already in a few counties. The Panchen Erdeni wired back to Mao Tse-tung on June 17th that he was "much impressed by the lively joyous spirit that had emerged in towns and villages in his two months' absence." The Tibetan people, he said, "were becoming masters in their own house".

On June 28th, under the Panchen's chairmanship, the second plenary session of the new local government of Tibet opened. The first session had been held on April 8th, in which the Preparatory Committee had formally assumed power. The second session was to pass the "democratic reform". Already it could take account of hundreds of newly organized "peasants' associations", sending greetings, prepared to carry the reform through. Six hundred people of all social strata attended the session as "observers", from all parts of the land. Among them were one hundred serfs, sent by the new Peasants' Associations, sitting down in the same room with nobles for the first time in Tibet's long history.

After three weeks' discussion, the "democratic reform" was proposed in two stages. The first stage would be the "*san fan* and *shuang jian*", the "three abolitions and two reductions". Rebellion, forced

labor, and personal servitude were to be abolished, exorbitant land rents and interest to be reduced. Peasant associations, under supervision of the military control, would enforce these new decrees. Land rents would be negotiated with nobles and monasteries that had taken no part in rebellion, but would be about twenty percent of the crop; on rebel lands the harvest would go to the tiller, without rent or taxes this year. Meantime the new local government of Tibet would negotiate with all loyal nobles and monasteries for the purchase of their estates, with cattle and implements, leaving to each of them whatever house they chose to live in, and whatever land they needed for personal use. When this was accomplished, the second stage of the "democratic reform" would come: the free distribution of land to the former serfs.

The plenary session closed July 17th, with the adoption of the "democratic reform". Across the roof of the world the news spread like wildfire, to peasants' and herdsmen's meetings and to new loudspeakers in market-places. In Lhasa they sang and danced in the streets.

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Already the staff for the reform was coming, prepared for eight years by Peking. Over ten thousand Tibetans had been getting some education in other parts of China, most of them serfs who had run away to the PLA. Of these 3,400 were returning to help the reform; fifteen hundred came in early June, the rest

after the June graduations. Five hundred and fifty Tibetan cadres, civil servants in autonomous Tibetan districts in adjoining provinces, were being transferred into Tibet; of these one hundred and twenty-five had enough experience to become county secretaries or district chiefs. Within Tibet itself the "activists" among the serfs were growing fast, illiterate still, but learning from local experience. There were even lamas who had taken part in suppressing rebellion and who were now helping to organize villages.

All of these together would be the staff to organize the new Tibet. They were not nearly enough for so wide a land. But everywhere new people were rising and learning. There had been no staff at all eight years ago.

In Peking I had seen the first group of returning Tibetan students take off by special train at the end of May. I had asked the man who came from Lhasa to pick them, whether any of these could have gone to Tibet safely before the rebellion. He shook his head. "They would have been safe in our offices", he replied, "but they could not have gone safely into the villages for the armed retainers of the serf-owners might have caught them, and they might have paid with their lives.

"Now they can go safely with only normal caution. For the serf-owners concentrated all those armed retainers into a rebel army, and the rebels are beaten and scattered, some captured, some in India, a few hiding

out in distant hills. Now the serfs have awakened, and the people of Tibet will protect the reform".

Looking back at the eight years in which these events were prepared one sees that all of those years were needed. The careful approach of the PLA, which began to win Tibetans before the battle of Chamdo, the eight months' delay in Chamdo, that the PLA might enter Tibet by agreement with its local government; the slow advance towards Lhasa explaining in every populated point, paying for goods and services; the three great highways that knit Tibet with the rest of China; the schools, hospitals, experimental farms, seed loans, gifts of implements, which, even though sabotaged, were known to the people — all these awakened the people while the staff for the coming reform was prepared.

The rebellion also played its part for when it was launched in Lhasa the Tibetan people had not yet chosen sides. It took the terrorist acts of the rebels, the disciplined waiting by the Hans in their compounds, the quick, final counter-attack by the PLA that cleared the city of disorder with minimum loss of life. It took the flight of the *kasha's* majority into India and the empowering by Peking, after the *kasha's* flight, of the Preparatory Committee, already designed for government, with the Dalai Lama still chairman, even in absence, while meantime the Panchen Erdeni led.

Thus the Tibetan people were never forced to choose between loyalty to Peking and to Lhasa. When the PLA moved out across the land to confiscate the whips

and torture implements and tell the serfs that the harvest would be theirs, they went in the name of Peking and of Lhasa too. The people, without conflict of loyalties, could realize how deeply they hated those old torments and how they could now be free.

V. VISITS IN LHASA

Our first trip in Lhasa was to a Sunday picnic in Norbu-Linka — the name means "Jewel Park" — where the Dalai Lama had his summer palace. He had, we learned, at least three palaces there, an old one, a new one and a pavilion known as "Ferryboat to Eternity" built on a pond. He much preferred his New Palace, which he had built in 1954-55, to the lofty but gloomy Potala and had been in residence in the early days of the March rebellion. Since three thousand armed rebels, including the undisciplined Khampas, had also been "in residence" in Jewel Park, it was clearly a large area. They had been dislodged by battle, so we were prepared to find some damages, if not the wholesale havoc the foreign press assumed.

When our nineteen foreign correspondents arrived at Jewel Park on a beautiful morning, we saw before us a ten-foot wall of clean fitted rock with a handsome gateway gleaming in the sun. Jewel Park, we learned, is an enclosed forest about half a mile square, surrounded by a high wall. The rebels had camped in the forest and made fortifications against the wall. These had been demolished in battle and the outer

wall had been somewhat damaged but was now repaired. That was why it looked so new.

We had little time to admire the architecture of wall and gateway. Hundreds of people, mostly children and young folks, were lined up on both sides of the road to greet us with flowers in their hands. As we left our autos, they rushed towards us, each handing a bouquet of flowers to some chosen recipient. My hands were soon full of seven large bouquets, most of them given by children. The crowd seemed largely primary and secondary school young people and former serfs, with bright red sleeves for Sunday best. I saw however several women whose manner, dress and grooming indicated them as of the upper class.

I especially recall a woman whose well-groomed hair and skin, well-matched clothing and decorum of manner indicated her as a noble woman, possibly for the first time mingling with serfs in a picnic. She stood at first in front of the crowd but was pushed back into it by the rush. She fixed eyes on me and came steadily but without pushing, and I felt she was picking me out because I was a woman and well along in years. She could not speak my language nor I hers but she handed me her very neat bunch of flowers with a look that said, as plainly as speech: "We are trying to build a good country here. Deal fairly with us." I have seldom been more moved.

Inside the gate the road lay straight ahead. To the left lay a wide forest park in which groups of people were dancing to home-made music; on the right rose a

yellow wall, some six feet high, beyond which we occasionally glimpsed tops of buildings. These were dwellings for the Dalai Lama's retainers, guards, tutors. Some distance along this wall we came to a gate which led directly into the Dalai Lama's New Palace. The size of Jewel Park may be judged from the fact that the New Palace enclosure was itself about a city block long by half a block wide, yet it was only a fraction of Jewel Park.

The gate was opened for us and we entered a well-kept garden, where groups of shade trees were interspersed with areas of bright sunlight, in which flamed brilliant beds of flowers. The palace itself was like a dream palace from Hollywood, a long two-storey rectangle of cream stucco, with brown framed windows, decorated by many golden fixtures, ornamented a bit too lavishly, set in bright flowers and shady trees. The yellow wall around it, high enough to give full privacy, permitted a circling view of nearby forest and distant mountains. How the man who had built this for himself must love it! He had moved to it from the thirteen storey Potala in the first days of March before winter was over. Four days later, the rebellion began and seven days after that, the rebels had taken the Dalai Lama out of Jewel Park and out of Lhasa, perhaps forever. His servants and gardeners still tended the house and garden. Would the Dalai Lama ever come back?

No fighting had reached the New Palace because of its distance back in the park. But the rebels camped

in the forest had kept the Dalai Lama from contact with the outer world. Two stray practise shots by undisciplined Khampas in the days before the battle had hit the palace. One had knocked off a cornice and the other had pierced a window in the room where the Dalai Lama was sitting and passed near his head. This had made His Holiness express much anger against "the Sikang troops", and had led to his statement in the letter to General Tan Kuan-san that the rebels, under pretext of protecting him, were endangering him. The window and the cornice had both been repaired.

Inside the palace was much less inviting. The first floor was a maze of tiny dark rooms for bodyguards and servants; I later found this a characteristic of feudal architecture in Tibet. Upstairs, where the Dalai Lama himself had lived in lonely splendor, and where no woman had ever penetrated the lodging, not even for cleaning, until we came, the rooms were much more gaudily decorated but not much larger or better lighted than the servants' rooms below. I found them disturbing and not really pleasant, because every inch of wall, floor and ceiling was decorated with carvings, paintings, rugs in the hot, restless colors, orange, yellow and red. Nor were the rooms as well lit as the size of the windows, seen from the yard, had indicated. Some were draped with hangings that admitted no outside light, and in others the windows were in alcoves, and brought little cheer to the room.

He seemed to have lived in a small, tight treasure-box, encased in splendor but with little space or light. His bedroom was hardly more than a cell, some eight by ten feet, with a low, wide bunk set into the wall, still holding the bedding that the Dalai Lama had left. Its woodwork was carved and painted sumptuously, but the turned-back blankets were heavy and coarse, and under them lay only a padded quilt of white cotton, somewhat soiled. It had been March when he left, and cold. In color the room was warm enough, all yellow and gold and red lacquer, every inch decorated with Buddhas. It was hardly a room for rest.

Most of the other rooms seemed designed for different kinds of scripture reading or conference. The room through which the bedroom was approached seemed a "morning room" where the scriptures were read on arising. It was not large, perhaps twelve feet by twelve, with a thick orange carpet and red and gilt lacquer walls. Its feature was the low divan, not very different from the bed, but equipped in mid-front with a handsomely carved lectern, so that the Dalai Lama might squat on the divan for reading, with a table nearby for extra manuscripts and books. One wall of this room was filled by a deep glass case containing three statues of different aspects of deity: the Kwan-yin, or goddess of mercy, in the center; a formidable demon on the right known as the "Dula", the protector of Tibet, and the "Record-Keeper" on the left. None of these gods looked happy or companionable; whether the record-keeper records sins or something

lesser, I do not know. A modern radio of Soviet-make stood on a table, a present from the Soviet ambassador to Peking, given the Dalai Lama on his trip in 1954. On another table a plain green pitcher had been left from a serving of the Dalai Lama's buttered tea.

Even this room seemed poorly lighted but there was a window, placed rather awkwardly in a corner, and next to it stood the only chair in the room, a small padded yellow rocker, even more awkwardly twisted into position to look through the window at the mountain view. No one arranging a room would have placed it so clumsily. It must have been moved there by the Dalai Lama to look at the far away hills.

From this room opened the only bathroom I saw anywhere in Lhasa, fitted with fairly modern fixtures, advertising "Shank's Vitreous China". The fixtures were disconnected. I saw no running water in Jewel Park, or anywhere else in Lhasa. A city water works was said to be planned but had not yet been built.

A series of scripture-reading rooms ran along the northern side of the palace. In the first of these the low divan with lectern was repeated, in gilt and lacquer, and every inch of wall was covered with painted scenes in the life of Buddha. Opening from this was a small room containing the "secret canons". Then came the only large room, some twenty-five feet square, with a throne and pulpit for "presiding at ceremonies". This also was heavy with ornament in red and gold. Its thick rug was dark red with a stylized border, its walls were covered with gods and demons and men

engaged in strange deeds, its golden throne was a gift from the Khampas in the name of the "Four Rivers and Six Ranges", which had proved to be an underground organ of terrorism and sabotage.

I glanced very briefly at the rooms along the eastern end of the palace, one for debating the scriptures and two others for receiving government ministers or Living Buddhas. Murals here were historical and showed the wedding of King Srontsan with the Princess Wen Cheng and the history of Buddhism in Tibet. I went downstairs with a sense of oppression. How beautiful this palace had seemed from the garden! How glad I was now to get out of it into the sun! How burdened it was with men's ancient sins and worship, all carved in red and gold.

Down the road from the New Palace we came to another enclosure and entered the "Ferryboat to Eternal Bliss", an ornate summer pavilion on an artificial and rather stagnant pond. Crowds were gathering for lunch and I was led to a reserved area with a view of the water, where candies, cakes and fruit were laid out and tea of three kinds was being served: the pale jasmine tea of China, the strong black tea with milk, as in Britain, and the green "buttered tea" of Tibet. I tried the latter and didn't like it, but I admit its nutritive value for it was thick with rancid yak butter and the parched barley flour known as *tsamba,* all churned together. I settled for the pale hot jasmine. Presently there came also sour milk and *tsamba,* and great bowls of yak butter. I mixed this all

Greetings at Jewel Park's newly repaired gate

The Dalai Lama's abandoned summer palace

An ancient Tibetan opera in Jewel Park

Calling on Mrs. Apei in the "house she intends to keep"

under direction and agreed that it was nourishing. I refused the barley beer.

As I turned my eyes from the sunlit pond I found myself sitting next to Living Buddha Jaltsolin, the "reader" to the Dalai Lama who had carried to him the first letter from General Tan Kuan-san during the rebellion, and been thereafter imprisoned by the rebels. He was a kind-looking, dignified man whom I always seem to call "Bishop", which indeed expresses his rank. He told me that the rebels had threatened him several times but had not actually ill-treated him and the "imprisonment" had been a house arrest in the house assigned to him within Jewel Park as the Dalai's "reader". The rebels had tried to force him to go with them to India but he had said that the Dalai Lama had given him a task to do in Lhasa, after which they had let him remain. He had remained in his house until all fighting was over.

I asked if he had any news of the Dalai Lama from India. When he said that he had not, I asked if he expected the Dalai Lama's return.

"According to his past desires he would wish to return," replied Jaltsolin, "but he is in hard conditions and it is not clear whether he can get away."

Had Jaltsolin any message for people abroad? He thought it over and then launched into a rather long message, in which he wished "that all people in the world might enjoy peace and none might suffer oppression". Then he became specific.

"Here in Tibet, people used religion to exploit other people. Living Buddhas thought how to get more lands and serfs and treasure. This is not the Buddha's teaching. When the big monasteries oppress the small ones, and the upper lamas oppress the poor lamas, this is not freedom of religion. I myself did not like it, even in the past. I think the Dalai Lama, as I knew him, did not like it. We are now learning that only by abolishing exploitation can we abide by the teaching of Sakyamuni. It was through the Communist Party that the people got freedom of religion. Because of this I can now serve the people and follow truly the teachings of Buddha. I am very glad of this. . . .

"Tell the American people that the Tibetan people have received full liberation and will move towards happiness now."

I told the Living Buddha that not only in Tibet, but in all the lands I knew, men of wealth and power had used religion to oppress the people. But also in all lands there had been men of religion to whom religion meant the service of the people. I mentioned some such that I knew in America. Jaltsolin seemed pleased.

I left the "Ferryboat to Eternal Bliss" and walked across the park to find the "Tibetan Opera". Everywhere we came upon groups of people, dancing folk-dances of many kinds under the trees or in open glades. They told me that in the past the Dalai Lama had opened Jewel Park once a year to public use at a festival in June, but that now it would probably be opened oftener. The New Palace had not been open to anyone

but the Dalai Lama's personal guests; we were the first outside visitors. Before we left Tibet, however, the New Palace also was being opened to occasional public view. The authorities seemed to be feeling their way in such matters, testing the popular demand.

Across the park we came to an open space which was protected from the direct sun by a very large white canvas, swung aloft by ropes to trees in a manner I was to learn was a habit in Tibet. "Auspicious designs" appliquéd on the canvas stood out dark against the sunlight, because of double thickness. An audience of several hundred was seated on the ground around the open space, and we were given places of honor in chairs, where we were shaded from the sun but had a view of the pines and the distant blue sky and hills.

Groups of dancers whirled on the improvised stage under the high canvas. Their black heart-shaped masks, dark variegated costumes and wild leaps were so ferocious that I took them as "devil-dancers" — a Western term that I did not find used in Tibet — until I learned that this was an opera about King Srontsan's wooing of Princess Wen Cheng, and these were dancers of the king's court. They were followed by equally wild dancers in yellow silk robes and big red hats who were the king's attendants preparing for the trip to the Great Tang Court! The king himself danced among them; you knew him by his "scepter", a long wand with a music box at its end that made tinny noises. The king's dance with his ministers in incredible costumes merged in an eye's twinkling into a scene

in the Great Tang Court itself at 1,500 miles distance.

Before the ugliest Tang Emperor ever seen, and a Princess who was the most hideous woman ever on any stage — both of them with enormous head-dresses of paper flowers on wires that stuck out four times as big as their heads, — the envoys came from many nations to seek Wen Cheng in marriage, doubtless because of her connection with the Tang Dynasty since no other attraction was apparent. The Indian suitor came with a group of dancing dervishes, and sundry tribes unknown to modern days also sought the princess. Srontsan did best on the test questions and finally the golden Buddha statue was reverently placed in a sedan-chair and started on its 1,500-mile trek to Lhasa with the Princess Wen Cheng walking alongside. Loud drums saw the royal couple off the stage and many dancing yaks surrounded them. Each yak was danced by two men under a single animal-skin, one carrying the fore part, the other the rear. Since the rear man could not see through the animal skin, and the yaks were greatly excited by the double acquisition of a princess and a Buddha, some hind-legs got separated from their fore-legs and tangled with the audience, which quickly moved out of the way. . . .

It was a very energetic performance of one of Tibet's most ancient and popular operas by Lhasa's best professional troupe.

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The following day we called on Ngapo Ngawang Jigme — usually known as Apei — in the building of

the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region. An imposing four storey building with gold roof and cornices in old Tibetan architecture had been erected in a small park opposite the Potala to house this committee.

Apei, its Secretary-General, and hence chief executive for Tibet, received us in a large reception room to which a rug of deep yellow gave the tone. The windows looked out on tall, green mountains and potted plants stood on all the sills. On one wall hung a great map of the world, on another a map of China, on a third an enormous scarlet banner inscribed in Tibetan script.

Since Apei himself was a noble owning four thousand square kilometers of land and 2,500 serfs, and yet was chief executive of a government which was to abolish serfdom, we asked him about the ways in which this change would occur and what the nobles' attitude was towards it. He also gave details of how the previous *kasha* had obstructed the 1951 Agreement, and told us how he was reforming his own estate.

Thirty percent of the nobles, said Apei, had supported the central government against the rebellion. These were the "progressive wing", who realized that serfdom was a backward form of society and must be abolished for the sake of Tibet's future. The central government offered an unusually good arrangement in its proposal to buy out the property of all loyal nobles instead of confiscating it. Hence the "progressive nobles" basically supported the reform. Rebel estates

were confiscated, but this did not necessarily mean that the whole estate was thus taken. Ownership was complicated; a family estate might belong to several brothers with children involved and only one brother might have been a rebel. In that case only the share of the rebel brother was confiscated but all this accounting took time.

Even the progressive nobles had difficulties and misgivings which the local government sought to allay. These concerned chiefly the final stage of the reform; they worried about how much compensation they would get. The local government was still in process of determining this through committees on which the nobles themselves sat. The central government was prepared to give considerably more than a hundred million US dollars to the redemption fund.

The progressive nobles were in general reconciled to the first stage of the reform, in which land rents and interest rates were drastically reduced. They recognized that the heavy rates in Tibet were far out of line with the customs of the modern world and were a heavy burden on Tibet's progress. This year the land rents would be no more than twenty percent of the crop, and interest rates no more than twelve percent a year. This was a very sharp cut in the nobles' gross income but was balanced in two ways. The first was that the nobles were relieved from the heavy taxes and labor duties which they had owed to the *kasha* and the burden of which they had passed on to the serfs. The feudal government had been very

complicated, corrupt and expensive. Now that the central government paid for the army and for government transport, and even at present for the costs of Tibet's local government above the county level, the demands on the nobles for taxes would be very much less. The local government itself was being organized on a much more efficient basis, cutting out duplication and graft.

Moreover, the nobles had lived very extravagantly under the old system, not because this greatly increased their comfort, but because it was due to their rank to have several retainers always following them about. Now the progressive nobles had taken the initiative in introducing a simpler fashion of living. Hence, even with land rents and interest rates sharply reduced this year, most of the nobles were not really much worse off than before. The chief worry in the present stage was the fear that the serfs would bring the nobles up before accusation meetings. Since the Communist Party promised that this would not be done against any but the rebels, the progressive nobles approved, on the whole, of the first stage of the reform.

Efforts were being made to combat the ancient attitude towards physical labor, which for centuries the upper class had regarded as a base activity, fit only for slaves. Joint drives were organized to clean up Lhasa, to improve irrigation, and for other tasks of the common good. Members of the upper class and even some lamas were beginning to take part. The feudal attitude towards labor also began to disappear when nobles

went as delegates to the other parts of China, and saw the great wealth that labor created.

The take-over of nobles' property and its division among the former serfs would proceed as fast as the new Peasants' Associations were ready to handle the distribution. The compensation for this final stage was not finally determined for the question was complex. In general, land would be redeemed at a price equal to its net income per acre for six years. Livestock and implements would be valued at market prices, though there were no unified prices in Tibet. One complexity came from the fact that every big noble operated through many sub-landlords, most of them serfs of the *tsaiba* type. Their interests also had to be considered.

Apei himself, by preliminary estimate, stood to get between eight and nine hundred thousand yuan from the government for his estates. This would last his very large family for decades, until not only the children but any grand-children were educated and settled in jobs. Even without this compensation, Apei had a good salary from the government as Secretary-General of the Preparatory Committee. Many nobles were not so fortunate. Some would find the compensation inadequate, especially if they lacked education or experience for administrative work. In their cases there would be adjustments, for the policy was that none of the loyal nobles should suffer a loss in livelihood through the reform. They would of course lose the attendance of hundreds or thousands of serfs, but the new power-plants and modern industries would bring

a convenience of living which even the nobles had not previously enjoyed.

Such was the view of the progressive nobles; I was to hear more of it when I had tea with Mrs. Apei in "the house they had chosen to keep". This view had grown through the eight years' contact with Peking. Many nobles had visited other parts of China and seen the greater conveniences of modern life.

The former *kasha,* said Apei, had obstructed in every way the fulfilment of the pledges taken in the 1951 Agreement. They had made no moves towards incorporating the Tibetan Army into the People's Liberation Army, nor had they made any moves in the direction of democratic reform. On the contrary, they had obstructed schools, hospitals, experimental farms, and even sabotaged the fulfilment of proposals that they themselves had made.

In 1954, for instance, when the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni went to Peking for the session of the National People's Congress, fifty or sixty Tibetan officials went with them and stayed some months to make extensive tours. At that time the Tibetan delegates themselves stated that the Tibetan Army lacked discipline and was a burden on the people and that they would reorganize it step by step, first introducing the same system and education as that of the PLA and then incorporating it into the PLA. The proposal to set up the Preparatory Committee came from the Dalai Lama's own entourage. The proposal to add Chamdo to Tibet was made by the Tibetans and the National

Congress acceded. A proposal was made on the currency, for Tibet was in throes of inflation because the *kasha* was printing its own currency without backing or restraint. It was proposed to stop printing currency and that currency already circulating should be recalled by four million silver dollars which the central government should give. The central government was also to pay 700,000 silver dollars annually for the *kasha's* costs of government.

All this was proposed by the Tibetans, on the basis of many telegrams collected by the Dalai Lama from all parts of Tibet. But after the central government had agreed, and the Dalai Lama had returned with his entourage to Lhasa, the *kasha* obstructed all these reforms. It did not dare express open opposition, because the proposals had been made by the Tibetans themselves, but underground obstruction was carried on by instigating lower officials and the big monasteries to oppose the changes and by intimidating any progressive officials who tried to carry them out. The *kasha* continued to print currency and its value kept dropping. The *kasha* could not prevent the formation of the Preparatory Committee, because all other parts of Tibet chose their delegates and the *kasha* did not dare stay out. But if any of the *kasha* delegates took their duties honestly in the Preparatory Committee, the *kasha* withdrew them. So the work of the committee in organizing and enlarging Tibet as an Autonomous Region could not progress. Meantime the

kasha organized rebellion, beginning in 1955 in Szechuan on the way back from Peking.

This was because the *kasha* was dominated by the biggest and most reactionary serf-owners, who had never had any intention of permitting reform.

Apei had begun the reform on his own estate already. He had not had time to visit it for he was busy in Lhasa and his lands were some distance away. He had called to Lhasa fifteen representatives from his stewards and sub-landlords and peasants, and had explained the reform to them in detail, and worked out with them the way in which each unit of the big estate of 4,000 square kilometers might handle its affairs. He had made stock-taking of land, livestock and implements to facilitate the coming purchase.

Since the abolition of personal servitude was part of the first stage of reform, Apei had set free his *nantsam,* the house and field slaves. This was a more complicated process than may appear. "It is not enough to set *nantsam* free," said Apei. "They must be given housing, food, seed and implements, or they will starve." *Nantsam* formerly had no housing but slept in kitchens and stables. *Nantsam* also would share in the distribution of land. Some *nantsam* would probably remain as house servants but would get wages and be free to leave. Some might eventually go away to jobs in cities.

The abolition of serfdom, it was clear from Apei's description, is not done by a single decree. Even when done by government purchase and without violence, it

is a complex process of organization and adjustment. Apei felt it a point of honor that the lands and serfs which his family had owned for a thousand years should be reorganized with proper consideration into the modern ways of life. He intended to set an example in Tibet.

After the long talk over tea-cups, Apei took us up to the fourth floor of the building to see the offices of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni. By tradition these must always be on the top floor of any building, since nobody else is permitted to be above them. The Dalai Lama, though absent in India, was still the chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, and his office was kept for his possible return. It was a luxurious two room suite, with a deep red rug in the outer office, a large desk for a secretary's use, and pale gold over-stuffed chairs for small conferences. The inner room was meant for privacy and rest. Here a large gold-draped divan with handsome carved end-pieces, was set on a floral rug, with two elaborately carved chests and two chairs in blue upholstery conveniently placed. The color scheme was not unlike that of the New Palace in Jewel Park, but the effect was utterly different, for the large well-placed windows gave a sense of light and space and a fine mountain view.

The Panchen's suite, as vice-chairman and now Acting Chairman, was almost an exact duplicate at the other end of the same floor, except for slight differences in decoration and the fact that the windows faced west.

Across the hall was a larger reception room for conferences which either the Dalai Lama or the Panchen Erdeni might summon or wish to attend. This duplication and equality repeated the theoretical position they do not always attain in actual life.

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On invitation from Mrs. Apei, I went to have afternoon tea with her and three other noble women in the house the Apeis have chosen to keep. It lay at the northeast end of Lhasa at the top of a long slope that swept down to the Lhasa River and that gave a wide southern view across the valley to the hills beyond. It was the house I myself would have chosen, the most conveniently modern home I saw in Tibet.

As we entered the gate, my eyes fell on the large stone, three-storey castle which at first I thought would be where the Apeis lived. It still belonged to them and some of their children still occupied it temporarily but Mrs. Apei said: "That old place was never comfortable and now that the serfs are free, we couldn't live there with all those small dark servants' rooms on the ground floor. Let the government buy it and make it over as dormitory or offices as they like. We built our new house a few years ago."

The new house was off at one side, a modest structure in what might be called California ranch-house style, a square main one-storey building with a long wing to the left. A few low steps led to a porch and an entrance hall, from which I saw that the wing to

the left held the kitchen and servants' quarters, while the family rooms extended around the hall to the right. The living-room, in which tea was prepared, was large enough for a family and a few guests but not for pretentious entertaining. Its entire south wall was of plate glass windows which gave on a walled garden of flaming flowers, beyond which was the view of hills. The hardwood floor was well covered with good rugs. The ceiling was blue, the wall dull orange with a three foot base-board of dull green wood. It would have passed in Hollywood as a daring color scheme in exquisite taste. Heavy draw-curtains of brown lined with yellow silk edged the window, and inside them were thin white curtains dotted with tiny lilac flowers.

Most of the seats in the room were the low hassocks covered with fine rugs, which provide seats in Tibetan style, but near the window stood a divan of normal Western height, well-cushioned with pillows, and flanked by two comfortable chairs of fine wood with good upholstery. The coffee table was set near them and Mrs. Apei led me towards them. "For guests from outside Tibet," she smiled.

Mrs. Apei wore a dress of brown wool with orange-yellow silk sleeves; a brown and pink striped apron covered her skirt. For jewelry she had a gold bracelet and gold wrist-watch, diamond ear-rings and a triple-strand necklace of small pearls which to my inexperience resembled those I myself possess from Woolworth's but which probably cost a good deal more. It

may be easier in Tibet to get real pearls than to reach a Woolworth store.

Mrs. Lang Tun to whom my hostess introduced me, wore a black dress with a flowered jumper and seemed older than Mrs. Apei, though she was only forty-eight to Mrs. Apei's forty-five. Her husband, I learned, was a member of the Preparatory Committee which governed Tibet. He was, in fact, a rather important member, for he had been nephew of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and entrusted by him with the care of records. He was thus able to testify in a meeting in Lhasa that the Simla Conference had never been ratified while the McMahon Line, which India claimed as boundary, had been long ago repudiated by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and had never come into existence at all. Mrs. Tsui Ke, a member of the Women's Preparatory Committee, was definitely an older woman who sat knitting quietly during most of our talk. Mrs. Song Tun was wife of a progressive noble whom the rebels had wounded, a story I had not time to get.

Mrs. Apei told me that she had come from a serf-owning family. "My family income as well as my husband's," she said, "came from the labor of peasants and herdsmen. My husband always had an official post, but official salaries were not high. The real income was from the estates. We had estates in both the farming and the pastoral regions and drew income both from peasants and herdsmen. It never occurred to us that there was anything wrong in this, we thought it the proper way to live."

Before 1951 Mrs. Apei never discussed any politics. That was not a woman's sphere. She had a tutor in the home but did not learn to read and write. "I learned to keep accounts so that I could list the household property," she said. "Girls were not supposed to need book knowledge." She did not learn the alphabet until after 1951 when she was not far from forty years of age.

Mrs. Apei's awakening began with her visit to Peking. She went with her husband from Chamdo when he went to negotiate the 1951 Agreement. She was carrying her ninth child, a boy, who was born in Peking. Despite her pregnancy she took time to see many things in various parts of China.

"The land reform was just finished," she said. "I heard people talking about the goodness of this change. I saw that the working people lived better and were happier than in Tibet. I saw that our way of life was wrong because only a few could enjoy life and the great majority of Tibetans were very miserable. I saw clearly that not only the rich but also the working people have the right to a good life." She began to study the alphabet and then to read and write. In 1954 she became one of the founders of the "Preparatory Committee for Patriotic Women" through which Tibetan women began to be "equal in politics".

I was astounded to learn that Mrs. Apei had twelve children. "All mine," she affirmed with a smile, "and all lived". She added: "Tibetan women usually have many children, but it is seldom that most of them

live." She thought the reason hers lived might have been because she "always took care of them herself and gave them close care".

Her oldest daughter was twenty-two and was married in Kalimpong, India; the second daughter was married in Lhasa. The next two boys and two girls were studying in Peking in the Central Institute of National Minorities. "The central government pays all their needs," she said. "The eldest son is good in mathematics and expects to be an engineer." Six were at home, four of them in the Lhasa Primary School and two not yet of school age.

If all the twelve children should ever come home at once, the present modest house that the Apeis have chosen to keep will be rather crowded. But Mrs. Apei thinks it most unlikely that the children will all return at the same time. "The girls will marry, the boys are thinking of jobs in all parts of Tibet. Sons no longer bring their wives to their father's home." The house the Apeis have chosen is just the right size for modern living, with rooms for children still going to school, and for some who come on visits, with quarters down the wing for a few servants, but not for a clutter of serfs.

"When my husband had a post with the *kasha,*" she smiled, "four or five servants had to go with him just to show his rank wherever he went. That is part of a past life."

Mrs. Lang Tun had had ten children. Only four had survived. This may have been why she looked

older than Mrs. Apei. She had sent her two oldest to India to study in 1947, but she brought them back in 1951 and sent them to Peking. The two younger had gone from the start to Peking to study. "Why should they go to India when we now have our own schools to go to," she said. "They can get as good medical training in Peking and much more useful political knowledge since they will live in Tibet."

It was in India, however, that Mrs. Lang Tun first learned that there was another way of life than serfdom. She went there in 1947 to take the children to school. "They didn't have serfs in India," she said, "and I felt in my heart that our backward system must change. When I asked the question in Tibet, there was no answer. It was a question women should not ask. After 1951 I saw that China was better, for now in China all nationalities are equal and women are equal with men. I began to study and then we founded the Patriotic Women, and I began to get my questions answered. Now I myself am no longer willing to live in the way we lived before."

Mrs. Tsui Ke, the oldest of the women, had been knitting quietly while we talked. When I turned to her, she said that she also had "lived on the labor of serfs" from her youth to the present year, but this did not mean that she had lived comfortably. "The land was badly used at random and production was never high."

"In the past way of life," she added, "if anyone was ill, there was never any good doctor. Women did not

study and were not supposed to discuss politics. Sometimes one heard that elsewhere in China women could read, and that people there travelled even on airplanes. But we did not know if this were true or not, because there was no communication. Only after 1951 when Han comrades came to Lhasa did I begin to study and have political views."

I asked all the women whether they had formerly thought of Tibet as part of China or as "independent". They replied that they had not thought of it at all. "We were never drawn into political discussion." But after 1951, they "learned from history" that Tibet had always been "connected with the motherland". They thought this a very good thing, because thus they were part of a strong country in which the many nationalities were equal.

"If Tibet were not part of a strong China, the Tibetans would become slaves of the imperialists," they said. "This has happened with many small nations of Asia. Those people in Tibet who talked about 'independence' always had some foreign connections. Why do so many British and American writers concern themselves with Tibetan 'independence'. Is it for the good of the Tibetans or for their own good?"

"This is the way it seems to us now," said Mrs. Lang Tun modestly but firmly. "Before 1951 we women never heard about such things."

How sincere were these women in their protestations of loyalty to the new society? Who can tell when they themselves are changing? But they will put a

good face on it and help organize the changes for the sake of themselves and their children. So loyalty will grow to the new future. The eight years of contact with Peking have made change easier for them and for Tibet.

VI. NACHI IN JOKHAN

From day to day I was hoping to find Lachi, the young Tibetan woman I had known in Peking and described in the first chapter of "Tibetan Interviews." A former serf in the Chamdo area, she had run away at the age of thirteen to the People's Liberation Army and walked with it all the way to Lhasa. Later she was sent to Peking to study at the Institute of National Minorities where, incidentally, she had been a classmate of one of Apei's children, the serf and serf-owner studying together.

I had seen her off in May at the Peking railway station, already a young graduate of twenty-two, very proud to have been chosen to go back to Tibet with the first group. I recalled the quiet fervor with which she said in my study: "For the rebirth of Tibet, for my own people, I will do anything." I had asked for news of her in Lhasa but nobody had heard her name.

Then suddenly she found me. She saw my name in the Lhasa newspaper in the list of foreign correspondents and writers who were visiting Tibet. She sent me word that she was working in Jokhan Monastery as a member of the "working team". Only her name was "Nachi", not "Lachi". Liquid sounds are rather

interchangeable in Tibetan and the way they are put into foreign tongues depends on the interpreter. They knew her in Lhasa as "Nachi"; that was why she had been hard to find.

My youthful enthusiast had landed in the holiest place in Tibet and was helping to change that hot-bed of rebellion into a law-abiding institution. She suggested that I meet her there and see her place of work. So at eight in the morning on a day when a religious festival brought more pilgrims than usual, I went to Jokhan to meet Nachi, to learn her work and to get a private tour of Tibet's holiest spot.

Jokhan is both a temple and a monastery. Its edifice is large and doubtless imposing but there is no place from which it can be seen as a whole. From distant hills or roof-tops you can glimpse the sea of golden roofs with their ornamental cupolas and dagobas. But when you approach on the ground, Jokhan fronts on a cobbled street so narrow that only part of its high, light-colored ornamental front wall can be seen at one time, while the side and rear walls disappear completely into the shops and buildings that have grown in the centuries around Jokhan and cluster against it.

The cobbled street widens a bit in front of the main entrance to give access to pilgrims. Here women were throwing themselves face down on the pavement and crawling towards a tall and very ancient doorway, past a booth where a lama collected funds. The lama glanced at me and paid no further notice for he saw in me a foreign unbeliever and he was busy taking

donations from the faithful. He wrote each donor's name on a thin slip of paper, and burned it at once in the court in the donor's sight. Thus the "record of merit" went straight to heaven, while the earthly book-keeping left the lama fairly free in accounting for funds.

I went past him and past the forms of women face down on the flagstones, and past another lama who was slowly advancing into the temple by measuring his length on the ground and then rising and throwing himself forward again. He was on pilgrimage all the way from Inner Mongolia, but if he had measured the entire two thousand miles length by length it might well have taken more than a man's life. I came through the dark entrance into the dim light of a courtyard open to the sky, and then through another dark arch-way into another open court which was partly roofed by one of those high flying canvases appliquéd with "auspicious designs"; here the designs especially included the "wheel of change". The casual architectural combination of ancient stone with flimsy canvas was to appear often in Tibet. Despite the brightness of the day, the courts were dim, partly because of the canopy but more because the height of the walls made the entry courts like bottoms of deep wells. Hundreds of grey-brown pigeons flying about in search of food also darkened the courts and dirtied them.

As I waited in the entry court for Nachi, a very filthy lama passed, carrying a large copper tea-pot to his dormitory somewhere in the building and several

dirty barefoot boys moved about for any alms they might pick up or steal. The pilgrim from Inner Mongolia who was inching his way length by length face down, caught up with me and passed on into the temple. The entrance into Tibet's Holy of Holies seemed just a bit filthier than anything I had yet seen.

Then Nachi came, in a very fresh blue robe lined with old rose, with an apron of bright horizontal stripes edged at the top with gilt brocade and with her long braids held in a neat coil by combs at the top of her head. I wondered how she made out in a monastery for she was a very good-looking young woman of twenty-two. She came eagerly to greet me and when I commented on her dress she said it was given her in Peking by the Institute for her graduation, but the apron was bought in Lhasa. Then the lovely charmer became a dignified organizer and introduced me to the two lamas she had brought with her, a patient worn-looking man of forty-three named Nawan Miju and a tall youth of twenty-four with a clean and glowing face and two gold teeth showing when he smiled, who was called Losantele.

Nawan Miju was chairman of the "Jokhan Committee for Quelling Rebellion". He smelled badly from two feet away. Above his wine-red robe he had a long-suffering face. He had been put into the monastery at the age of nine and had thus been a monk for thirty-four years but in Jokhan less than a year. Jokhan was constantly replenished by changing monks

Entrance to Jokhan with prostrate woman approaching

Losantele, an often-flogged young lama who intends now to marry

from other monasteries, who came for a short stay in this holiest place.

Nawan Miju was illiterate. At one time he had spent three years "learning to read the scriptures" but this was mostly by rote and what he learned did not survive the following years in which his hours were filled with labor for the upper lamas. Besides, even if he could still "read scriptures" he could not have read a newspaper or any modern book, for scriptures are in ancient Tibetan. Now that the rebellion was put down and schools were open for everyone, Nawan Miju hoped that he might learn to read and write and also learn a trade, such as tailoring. He intended to remain in the monastery for he knew no other way of life. He would attend the religious services but he also wanted some self-supporting work. Nawan Miju said little more about himself.

Losantele was in every way vocal and energetic and full of tales of his past oppressions. He also had been put into the monastery at the age of nine; he supplied the detail that he came from a serf family, a *duichun* family. He thought he had been flogged "at least a thousand times". Many of the upper lamas had flogged or kicked him but his teacher, who was actually his master, had been by far the worst. The master had often been drunk and at such times especially brutal. The youth had markings left on head and hips and arms from many floggings. He said that once, when he was twelve, and his teacher found some fault of carelessness in the way he swept the ground, his

hands and feet had been tied and he had been hung head down from a beam and flogged in this position while the rope was jerked up and let drop. His master had asked his parents to come and see, saying that their son was a very bad boy who needed punishing.

This brutal teacher, whose name Losantele gave, was working now in the new hydro-electric plant as a captured rebel and the youth had listed him as one whom he wanted to bring before an "accusation meeting" that his evil deeds might be known to the world. I asked Nachi if there was any likelihood that the teacher would be brought before such an "accusation meeting". She replied that this would depend on how many people demanded it. "There is not time," she said, "to accuse every evil person but only those against whom the demand is very strong." I felt that she had more to tell of Losantele later.

"Did anyone in the monastery ever show you kindness?" I asked the youth. "Buddha teaches kindness and compassion to all living creatures. Didn't anyone follow this teaching?"

The young lama replied that he had heard plenty of talk in the scripture halls about "kindness to all living creatures", but had "never seen any kindness shown by an upper strata lama to a poor lama. If any upper class lama refrains from flogging you, that is already very good. I never saw an upper lama give food to a poor lama who was hungry. They treated the laymen who were believers just as badly or even worse."

The youth was firm in his declaration that he had no intention of remaining a lama. He had a girl already and intended to marry. He had listed this demand with the "working team". They had advised him to wait until he got more education and learned a skilled trade. His girl agreed on this with the "working team". So Losantele was now full of plans for becoming quickly a skilled factory worker. It was clear why he looked cleaner and brighter than the other lamas. He was really a handsome youth, a bit impetuous, perhaps unstable.

The two lamas told how the rebellion had come in Jokhan. The head of the monastery had gone on March 10th to Jewel Park to the meeting that declared Tibet's "independence" from China, and had returned with the head of a municipal department and ordered the lamas to put on civilian clothes and take up arms. There had been 130 lamas at the time in Jokhan but only fourteen had really taken up arms and some of these had only knives. The monastery chief had a rifle and a pistol. Rumors of all kinds had gone around, that Living Buddha Pebala, a progressive, had been shot, that the Hans had kidnapped the Dalai Lama.

Five hundred Tibetan soldiers had come on the 20th, and camped in the outer courts of the monastery and set up cannon in front of the gates. The lamas had been ordered to help build fortifications on top of the monastery. They also dug a well, preparing for a long siege. Lamas were posted as sentinels at the four outer gates.

"The soldiers fought from here on the twenty-first," said the two lamas. "They shot the cannon and the PLA shot back. Some lamas were formed into groups to guard the gates but most of them ran away and hid in the dark chapels. Even those ordered to guard the gates did not remain very long at the gates; they also ran and hid. The Tibetan soldiers themselves ran away on the night of the 21st. So the lamas surrendered the next morning. The PLA took away the top leaders of rebellion and sent them to work on the new power-plant for Lhasa 'to repair some of the damage they had done'."

Next came the "working team" to organize meetings and classes for the lamas. Jokhan had normally only about a hundred resident lamas, but the "working team" arranged for seven hundred lamas from twenty-eight smaller monasteries to come to Jokhan for the political instruction. Most of these had joined the rebellion but without much understanding. The upper lamas had given them orders and they had obeyed. Now the lamas were studying through collective discussion the reasons why they had joined the rebels, and their entire relation to the upper lamas. They visited groups in other monasteries and attended "accusation meetings" and heard a few talks by Communists on the Marxist view of Tibet's serf society and the democratic reform that was being organized. Later, each one would make up his own mind what he wanted to do in the new society now being formed. Some made up their minds very quickly but the "working

team" asked them to wait till the end of the discussions before they finally decided.

"Was any damage done to Jokhan in the fighting?" I asked.

"A little," they replied. "A shell splinter knocked off a small piece of roof and another shell splinter hit the top of a shrine. These things have been repaired. There was not much damage because the Tibetan soldiers heard on the megaphone that they had been everywhere beaten, and they ran away in the night."

Nawan Miju offered to show me through the temple, I went forward into a pit of darkness, holding Nachi's hand. It was hard to see my footing on the uneven flagstones, and there were many dimly seen projections over which one might turn an ankle and trip. The interior seemed huge but its size was felt rather than seen. The only light came from butter-lamps and of these there were thousands. Sometimes they outlined the aisles, each lamp giving a tiny pin-point of light and all twinkling far into infinity, till the light was swallowed in darkness. Sometimes a huge tub of yak butter stood at an aisle corner, holding hundreds of pounds of stale butter, with dozens of small wicks burning on its surface. We met lines of pilgrims each carrying a butter-lamp and some individual worshippers carrying large containers of butter as an offering to Jokhan.

Jokhan burned over eight hundred pounds of butter daily, according to Nawan Miju, a large amount for a hungry land. All of this burning could not make

it light in Jokhan; neither the roof nor the far walls ever became fully visible. As my eyes adjusted and as I was led around the outer edges of the space, I saw that most of the outer wall was a succession of small chapels, each with its images and with a few butter-lamps. These chapels were so much darker than the main temple that I did not go into them.

I turned rather to the brightest part of Jokhan, a small enclosed space near the center of the temple, formed like a chapel partly open on three sides, where the lamps of a thousand pilgrims standing in a long approaching line fell on the holy "self-created" Buddha statue brought to Lhasa long ago in 641 A.D. by the Princess Wen Cheng. Nawan Miju led me so close that, peering upward, I could see the Buddha head in pale gold. The figure inclined slightly forward from the tall, upright box in which it stood, a shrine shaped like an upended coffin. Then I was quickly past and hardly knew what I had seen.

The throng had been so great and the tiny butter-lamps so dim and yet so dazzling and the time so brief before I was carried past that I hardly knew if it had been a box or part of the outer wall of a shrine, and if the Buddha's nose ran, as I thought, like the nose of a Greek statue, a straight line down from the fore-head. My chief memory was of the crowd, a long, thin, patiently waiting line of tiny lights that suddenly merged into a confused, pushing throng around the Buddha, each seeking to hold for a moment the object

of the quest and all pushed quickly forward into darkness by the many who came behind.

We went out from the darkness of Jokhan and I was glad to see the sun and taste the air.

*

A few days later Nachi came to my room for a leisurely talk over tea-cups. I asked for her personal experiences and she began with the railway station in Peking where we had said good-by. She had gone off with a hundred and fifty-three former serfs, now graduate students, packed tightly into two railway cars, all bound for Lhasa to help in the coming reform.

"For the first few stations," she said, "many of us were crying from saying good-by to so many friends and to our student days. Then somebody said: 'the time for crying is over', and we began to sing. We sang all the rest of the way to Lhasa. My favorite song is the Tsangpo River, about our great river in Tibet. We broadcast Tibetan songs from the broadcast-car on the train to the other passengers. We also helped clean and sweep the cars. The train workers and the passengers thanked us for our good deeds.

"After four days we reached Shatung in Kansu where we left the railroad to go the rest of the way by trucks. In Shatung the PLA welcomed us and saw us off. We sat on our luggage, twelve persons to a truck. In some places we stopped in a small house at night, in other places, in tents. At every place they gave us food and tea and the food was better than

at the Institute because there was much more meat. At every stop we helped the other travellers and we helped the station workers clean the tables and sweep the ground and floor. We got thanks from the station workers.

"We had a very cheerful journey of seventeen days to Lhasa. In Lanchow we had a two-day rest and in Tunhuang we saw the famous caves. Everywhere we were surprised by the great changes. In 1956 there were no houses on this road and now Kermo was a city and there were houses right on top of Kunlung Range and on snowy mountains. We thought how great is our motherland and how hard the Hans work. Now we Tibetans also will make great changes! We felt patriotic like a song in an opera, and very eager to help the democratic reform."

In Lhasa the new student-workers were eager to start work at once but were ordered to take seven days' full rest to adjust to the altitude. They were lodged in the Lhasa Hostel of the Working Committee on the outskirts of the city, where there were beds for several hundred guests. Relatives who lived in Lhasa poured into the hostel to greet the new arrivals. Parents came with tea and cakes and wept for joy to see children who had gone away years ago with thin, yellowish faces, hungry and under dangerous conditions, and who now came back rosy and robust and educated and ready to rebuild the land. Nachi's parents lived far away in Batang beyond Chamdo, a twelve days' journey by bus. They did not meet her in Lhasa but exchanged

telegrams and letters and she found a married sister in Lhasa who came to greet her.

"All the other students' families seemed to me like relatives too," she said.

For seven days the leaders of different government departments visited the students and discussed with them different lines of work. On the eighth day assignments were announced. On the ninth day a big farewell party was held, and the students turned in the money saved from their travel allowance, and blew it on extra cakes. On the tenth day they began to scatter to jobs all over Tibet, some to organize in villages, some to work with the military control, some to Loka, some to Shigatse. They had discussed on the way what they would do if the work assigned was not to their liking and had decided they would take any task assigned and try to do it well.

It was some days longer before Nachi got her assignment. After two short temporary jobs, she was called to the United Front Section of the Working Committee of the Communist Party, under which the monasteries came. Dean Wei of the office asked if she was willing to work with lamas. She replied that she would do any work assigned but had little knowledge of lamas. He asked if she was afraid of them. She replied that she was not. She was then assigned to the "working team" in Jokhan and she spent several days reading and discussing monasteries. After this her work in Jokhan began.

"I was a little afraid at first for from childhood I had an uncanny feeling about lamas and monasteries. Long ago I had believed that lamas were holy and had special powers. Now I myself was assigned to help lead these lamas out of dark oppression. By the second day I began to get acquainted with the lamas and then I was no longer afraid. I saw that the poor lamas had suffered very much, like other poor people. Some were in the monastery because of poverty and others because they wished to flee from the forced labor service, and some were very young when their parents put them in because of the monastery's demand. They always thought that life in the monastery would be better than the hard life of serfs. But they found that they had to work like slaves for the upper lamas, and to borrow money for food from their own monastery. They were flogged and tortured like serfs. Their life was no better than mine had been long ago when I ran away.

"So I wanted to do anything I could do to help those poor lamas. Many of them, I saw, were already 'activists' who were exposing the rebels. Even those who fought on the side of the rebels had done it because they were ordered by upper lamas and were themselves confused. They were looking to me for knowledge and help. Then I realized that if any lama was evil and tried to harm me, I would find many friends around who would protect me. So I ceased to fear and on the fifth day of my work I moved into Jokhan to live."

Nachi's work in Jokhan has in part been described.

She was one of a "working team" of thirteen members. They first got acquainted with the lamas, and led them to tell the story of their past lives and to describe their past oppressions. When they found "material for a meeting", a group discussion would be held, or even an "accusation meeting", in which upper lamas who had been especially brutal would be accused by the lamas they had oppressed. Nobody would be physically ill-treated in such a meeting; its purpose was to help the poor lamas understand the source of their oppression. In the past, the lamas had been told that all their misery was caused by their *karma,* their destiny which doomed them for sins in a past incarnation. Their present duty on earth was to submit and obey in the hope that their next incarnation would be a better one. The discussions began to show them the immediate present causes of their misery and with these, a way of change.

Lamas who had been captured in actual battle had first been taken away and confined. Then a sorting process began. Men who expressed a desire to help the Tibetan people were sent to work on the construction of the power-plant for Lhasa; about a thousand captured rebels had been working there, not even under guard, but organizing their own supervision. They got a small sum of pocket money besides their food, and from time to time, a group was released.

Losantele, said Nachi, had been a very eager rebel; he had taken up arms very willingly and had wanted

to kill not only the PLA men but all the Hans and even all Tibetans who associated with Hans. He had been captured in armed fighting and had been sent to work on the power-plant; that was how he knew that his former master was working there. Losantele's loyalties had changed fast and apparently completely. He had shown qualities of leadership and had been in charge of a hundred workers at the power-plant. He had clearly much useful ability and much energy. His change was, however, a little too sudden to seem very stable and when he wanted at once to marry, the "working team" had advised him to wait until he learned some technical skill.

It was Nachi's impression that at least half of the lamas wanted to leave the monastery. "There has been no canvassing of their future intentions for we think they should wait and study before making decisions," she said, "but I know the present intentions of many of them from remarks that they volunteer. Some have parents who want them to come home, some have found girls they want to marry, some want to study further, some want to get jobs. In all these matters they are free to choose, for the July 17th resolution on democratic reform gave the lamas 'freedom of person'. However, our 'working team' has a good deal to say about it, for they come to us for recommendation to a school or a job, and perhaps for a room if they want to take a wife." It was the policy of the "working team" to advise them all to take time before mak-

ing up their minds, to finish the political courses in Jokhan before leaving and to learn a trade before taking a wife.

Thirteen lamas, on their own insistence, had already gone from Jokhan to the Lhasa secondary school; three of these had married. "Each must make up his own mind in the end about his future relation to the changing society," said Nachi. "They are of all types."

I smiled at Nachi's cool appraisal of the lamas and especially at her analysis of Losantele's development. I had wondered whether she might not herself be falling in love with one of these lamas, even perhaps with this handsome young Losantele. She seemed emotionally quite aloof. So I asked whether any of the lamas had approached her with any intent of love-making during her residence within monastery walls.

"No," she said, "I have a pistol and can protect myself if need be. But it has not been needed."

"Don't any of them want to marry you?" I bluntly asked. Nachi blushed and replied that she had already a young man of her own, a boy she had known years ago as a child in Batang and whom she had met again in Lhasa, where he was in the People's Liberation Army, in the military control. I marvel constantly at the youth of today's China, and at the good sense with which they seem to choose their way among their emotions. Nachi wouldn't fall for one of those confused and recently converted lamas. She had picked a boy whose family was known to her family for genera-

tions, and whose job was as good as one could find in Lhasa. I asked if they planned to marry soon.

"My friends all say that I should marry soon," replied Nachi, "when we finish these courses in Jokhan. This task will end with September, and most of my friends think that would be a good time to marry. But I want first to work through the land reform and have some experience of the work in villages, until the land is divided. I am working now with lamas because I am assigned to this and because, if the reform is not done properly in the monasteries, the land reform also will suffer. Personally, I would rather work among peasants and especially among the women. I think I can establish closer relations of confidence with old peasant women and mothers than I can with lamas. When the work in Jokhan ends I hope for transfer to some village work until the completion of the land reform."

"What does the young man say?" I asked.

"He says it shall be whenever I say," replied Nachi. I wondered if their discussion had been as tranquil as her words. Quite possibly it had, for both of them are China's modern youth.

Three months earlier, Nachi had been an eager graduate from the Institute of National Minorities, a girl of much promise and considerable knowledge of heavy serf labor but with no experience in responsible work. Now she was already an organizer of the new Tibet. In a year or so more she would be a wife and presently a mother but the land reform came first.

For this would remain with her as the great event in her people's collective life.

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Between the visits with Nachi I went to see an "inhabitants' committee" in the south end of Lhasa and found the beginnings of new city organization at work. The former municipal government had been dissolved as feudal, corrupt and honeycombed with rebellion. A municipal commission had been set up, under temporary military control, but containing local citizens with experience in city affairs. Chuei Ko, its vice-chairman, was a progressive noble who had been one of the secretaries of the *kasha.* It was from him that I learned that Lhasa city had a population of some 35,000, now divided into four administrative wards — north, south, east and west — with two additional wards in the suburbs. Outside all this lay the far larger Lhasa area, which included eight counties in addition to the city, and was equivalent to a large province, in area and population about one tenth of all Tibet.

In each of the city wards a "working team" now functioned, like that on which Nachi worked, set up by the Working Committee of the Communist Party, which organized all over Tibet. As Nachi's team had helped create a committee of lamas through which it operated, so the "inhabitants' committees" had also grown up in the wards for the purpose of improving the living conditions. There were twenty-seven "inhabitants' committees" in Lhasa city.

We found "Inhabitants' Committee Number Six" of the south ward in an ancient, pretentious and rather dilapidated building on a narrow cobbled street. It had been one of many properties of Tsrijong, a cleric in the Dalai Lama's service, and as a former center of rebel activities, was now requisitioned. We climbed steep, narrow stairs to the upper floors where its former owner had lived when in residence and sat down with several members of the "inhabitants' committee" who had come to meet us.

The chairman was named Pingtso, a rather retiring man whose history I never learned. The man who did the most talking was Purbu, a dark man in a cream colored shirt, tan sweater and black felt hat with a steady flow of cigarettes. He was by trade a handicrafts-man who made fancy decorated felt boots. For the committee he was in charge of the *san fan* drive and had handled unemployed relief. Six or ten members appeared, some of whom came and went. Several women sat modestly back in the corners, apparently not quite used to their new sex equality.

It was Pingtso who made it clear, with the members all nodding assent, that the "inhabitants' committee" was not "state power". It did not even expect to become "state power" but would remain an association of citizens for neighborhood improvement. As such it would help set up "state power" and assist it. This distinction seemed very clear to these Tibetans, though most of them were illiterate and had only a few weeks ex-

perience in politics. They already knew in experience that the four regular schools of Lhasa, three primary and one secondary, were run by "state power", but that the hunger for education was far beyond what the state could supply and so the "inhabitants' committees" had organized thirty-five special night-schools and courses for illiterates with two thousand pupils. Their own committee ran both a primary school for ninety pupils and an evening school for thirty-five adults.

Through the "inhabitants' committee" the citizens were awakening to a democratic political life, and learning their relations to "state power". The 110,000 pounds of "relief grain" for the hungry unemployed of Lhasa and the two and a half million pounds of seed grain given on loan without interest to the peasants came from "state power" as emergency relief, but Purbu had personally organized some of its distribution. "State power" repaired the damages of battle to Potala, Jewel Park, Jokhan, Ramogia and other buildings in Lhasa and made the six miles of new road. But the "inhabitants' committees" were cleaning up their own neighborhoods, sweeping streets and yards with a vigor unknown before, and turning swamp land that bred disease into vegetable gardens that gave food to the poor. It was they who located homes for the homeless and brought the sixty-nine orphans to the primary school where "state power" then took charge of their maintenance. Already these relations were becoming clear.

This "inhabitants' committee" had been organized April 3, 1959, two weeks after the rebellion was quelled. It included 298 households of whom 93 were handicraftsmen, 50 traders, 15 were of the nobility and 140 had been "poor people", the beggars and homeless unemployed. The area ran from a stretch of the Lingkor, the outer circle where pilgrims measured their round by falling length after length on their faces, to the edge of the Parkor, the inner circle on which Jokhan faced, and took in sundry lanes and alleys between.

A notorious bit of wasteland on the Lingkor where homeless people had camped in hovels or ragged tents or even in the open air had given the committee its first problem. "We got them all settled with housing, jobs and relief grain," said Purbu. "Many went back to their villages where the land reform will give them land."

"Where did you get the housing?" I asked. "Did you build new?"

Purbu replied that some wards in Lhasa had built new housing but their neighborhood had not needed this, for there were many rental properties belonging to rebels and these had been used for the homeless inhabitants. This led into a discussion of housing. All houses in the neighborhood, said Purbu, had formerly belonged to the *kasha,* the nobles or the monasteries, and the people had rented rooms in them. Rents had been very high. "I myself had to pay twice the rent of whole year just for the permit to move in. After this I paid 1,250 taels a year and also had to do labor

service for my landlord, carrying water and bundles."

After the rebellion was put down, the inhabitants did not change the ownership of the houses; for this they had no power. But they had stopped paying rent. They made the small repairs and went to the military control if any big repairs were needed. When the democratic reform was accomplished and the Tibetan people created their new Autonomous Region and permanent government, then the ownership of houses would also be decided. Meantime the people stopped paying rent and labor duties but kept up repairs. They considered that rebel property was subject to confiscation, but if its owner had fled to India or been captured, while his family still lived in the house, they let the family have it, for they also had to have a place to stay. If the rebel's family had a lot of extra courts and rooms that were empty, the committee might ask them to take in some neighbors. All these housing arrangements were rather temporary because some people would move to villages and some to other jobs. Meantime nobody was without shelter, and that eyesore of hovels and ragged tents on the Lingkor was cleaned away.

I did not even have to ask if all this house changing was handled by military requisition. It was clear that a military requisition could be had if needed, and that probably the committee had secured some formal paper to take over the Tsrijong property as headquarters. It was equally clear that families of rebels would be

rather quick to agree to any reasonable "temporary" use by their neighbors rather than invite a military requisition which might be more drastic and permanent. The combination of local initiative on the spot with military control in the offing seemed a neat way to get results with the least friction.

The second main task of the "inhabitants' committee" had been the reclamation of an acre and a third of "waste land", where they had drained stagnant pools and planted a vegetable garden. They had also planted trees around the garden and along their main street and dug an irrigation ditch to water the garden and the trees. They had established "sanitary control". The streets and alleys had formerly been very filthy for people used them casually as privies, but now some "public toilets" had been set up and the entire neighborhood was on the lookout to keep people from dirtying their streets. People took turns in sweeping the yards and adjoining street.

"Who gets the vegetables from the garden?" I asked. Purbu replied that those who did the work had the right to the vegetables in proportion to the work they did, but actually, many people had helped plant the garden because they wanted to beautify the neighborhood and not because they especially wanted vegetables. They would let their vegetables go to the poor. I had no time to learn whether this was an act of benevolence or community spirit or a disdain for vegetables.

What had happened to the fifteen nobles who owned houses in the neighborhood? The committee had a

full report. They began with a brief survey of the past. "Under the former government," said Purbu, "the citizens couldn't raise their heads. The *kasha* appointed heads of every handicraft, and these were gangsters who beat up the workers as they liked. Besides the heavy rents there were heavy taxes, especially at the Great Prayer Festival when for three weeks the Iron Bar Lamas of Drepung were given charge of Lhasa municipality. They imposed more than sixty new taxes. Women were taxed for having more than one braid of hair. You were taxed for wearing leather shoes. You were taxed for having a dog or a cat and an extra tax for a bell on the dog's neck. You were taxed for every flower-pot. If it snowed on your street and in your yard — and the Great Prayer Festival is at New Years when of course it snows — you were taxed "for the benison of the snow" and if you cleaned it off, you were taxed because your ground was wet. If you couldn't show tax receipts for everything, you got a flogging or a very big fine."

The old municipal government had helped organize the rebellion. On March 10 it gave orders that men and women should gather in Jewel Park to prevent the Dalai Lama from going to the theatrical performance in the auditorium of the Military Area. Rumors were spread that the Hans would kidnap the Dalai Lama and all good Tibetans were urged to keep him in Jewel Park even if they had to lie down in front of his car on the road. People who did not go to the rebel gathering were fined fifty taels for women and five

hundred for handicraftsmen. Later the municipal government began conscripting all men from 16 to 60 into the rebel ranks and punishing any who refused to join. They said they were defending religion and the Tibetan nation so most of the people at first submitted, but later they saw that the rebels themselves made battlefields of holy places and raped nuns and gouged out citizens' eyes.

"So people began to see that the nobles and the *kasha* brought much suffering to the Tibetan people," concluded Purbu, "and now that life becomes better, this is due not to the nobles but to the Communists."

With this preamble Purbu stated that of the fifteen nobles who had residences in their neighborhood, six took no active part in rebellion. Three were progressives, one was too sick to take part in anything, one was away from home, and the sixth was a clerical officer who had just come home from a journey and had not been back long enough to be drawn into any local activity. These nobles lived as before and their homes were untouched.

Nine nobles had actively joined the rebels. Three of them had fled to India while six were captured in fighting and detained. One of the latter, a high official in the Dalai Lama's Peking office named Ramba, had repented of rebellion and been released and was again in his home. What happened to the houses of the other eight nobles depended on whether they had families living in them. Families of rebels who lived in the neighborhood were unmolested. Clerical nobles

had no families living with them. Their houses, like this of Tsrijong, might be used by the "inhabitants' committee" for some local need.

"Struggle meetings" had been held against two nobles, Shadza and Piroba and against two gangster bosses of the boatmen and the carpenters. People from the whole south ward had come to hear. Another big rebel, Tsarong, had lived in this neighborhood and had been captured in the Potala surrender. His serfs demanded a "struggle meeting", but Tsarong was seventy years old and died of a stroke before any meeting was held.[1]

"The people demanded a 'struggle meeting' with six other nobles," said Purbu, "but these have not been held." It seemed likely that there would be no more "struggle meetings" for the campaign of the "three abolitions" was drawing to a close. The harvest would come and then the land reform. The purpose of "struggle meetings" had not been to punish all the nobles but to awaken the people to the causes of past suffer-

[1]Tsarong is well known to foreign visitors in Tibet. He was not born in the Tsarong family, which was a very ancient noble family. He had been a gardener for the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and had become for some years his "favorite". Since the original Tsarong was loyal to China, the Thirteenth Dalai had him thrown off the roof of the Potala Palace, together with his son, thus exterminating all male Tsarongs. He then gave the name, the property and the women to his young favorite, who married both the daughter and the daughter-in-law of the house and became the richest man in Tibet. This Tsarong kept contacts with America and was Lowell Thomas' host in Tibet.

ing and to a sense of the people's power to end this suffering. This was basically accomplished by accusing the worst nobles and there was no need of accusing everyone.

The most exciting people one met in these "inhabitants' committees" were those who after long years of torment had suddenly awakened to life. In almost every person you met there was a notable human story, but some knew better how to tell it than others.

Lando was an example. She was a woman of 36, born a household slave. When she was only eight years old, her father had been flogged into paralysis and lay in his bed unable to rise. The overseer came to order his attendance and when the slave failed to rise, he was flogged in bed for "shamming", so that he died. While the girl of eight clung weeping to her mother, the overseer saw that the man was dead, so with a curse he kicked the mother in the belly and dragged the girl away as a slave. She tended sheep and slept in the barn with them. More than once she was raped and when found pregnant, was flogged unconscious and sold to another owner "to get rid of the shame". Once it was her master who raped her and the master's jealous wife who hung her to a beam, beat her into unconsciousness and sold her. For twenty-eight years Lando lived in this torment. Often she prayed for death but she feared to commit suicide lest she be born into an even worse incarnation. In all those years she never knew if her mother was living; communication was difficult between illiterate serfs.

When the "working team" in its round of getting acquainted with serfs, asked Lando if she had been "oppressed", she didn't know the meaning of the word. Nobody had ever talked about "oppression" but only about "fate". What happened, she thought, was her inescapable *karma.*

So the "working team" made it simpler and asked: "Did your master flog you or molest you or did he give grain for seed?" Then Lando understood and the misery of her life burst out of her in words so eloquent that she became the best speaker in the first "accusation meeting" she attended. She had the whole audience weeping and shouting: "Down with serfdom!" She was unanimously elected on the committee for putting down rebellion and increasing production.

Lando became what is known as an "activist". Life, she feels, has just begun. The "working team" helped find her mother, whom Lando had thought dead. The two are living together. Lando will learn to read, to study politics, to improve agriculture or to work at some trade. Her loyalty to the Communist Party that opened this new life to her is passionate and clear.

The awakening of human beings from bondage to freedom has happened often before in human society. Usually it has been in bloody uprising at heavy human cost. Seldom has it been done with such careful social engineering as today in Tibet. Only when I met these newly awakened serfs did I fully understand how the Working Committee had been sent as what in military affairs is called a "task force", an organized force to

do a definite task. It was sent by the Communist Party of China into a Tibet where there were no Communists but only serfs and their masters. Its task was to liberate and transform this Tibet at minimum human cost.

This could not be done by a victory in Chamdo, nor by giving government orders. It could only be done by awakening all over Tibet the people who would seize their chance for life. This was why no reforms were imposed in 1951 and serfdom was endured for eight years. Thus thirty percent of the nobles had been won, far enough at least so that they agreed to sell their estates to the government. However complete or incomplete their loyalty, their participation in government would ensure enough contact with the past for a peaceful transition. The loyalty and vital drive would come from the serfs. These were being reached, one by one, by the "working teams", now that the rebellion had been quelled.

The loyal nobles, the education of the lamas, the organization of the handicraftsmen as the new working-class, all had their place. But all of this was preparation for the revolution that was spreading through the countryside, through the awakening of the serfs.

VII. VILLAGE EAST OF LHASA

One of our first trips to the countryside was to a village east of Lhasa to meet the newly elected Peasants' Association and learn from them the various types of former serfs. Our autos turned right at Jokhan Monastery, through the narrow, winding stone-walled streets of the city, past markets set out on curbs or in nooks between buildings till we came to the eastern bridge over the Lhasa River. Here the fifteen hundred mile highway begins that goes over fourteen high ranges and eleven difficult rivers to Szechuan; it was built in 1954. We halted several minutes by the bridge for it is long and narrow, permitting only one-way traffic controlled at both ends, and we had to wait for a long line of peasant carts and donkeys coming into the city to market, interspersed with a few big trucks of the wider-ranging auto-transport. The river flowed fast and turbulent under the bridge and beyond it, large cumulus clouds rolled white in a deep blue sky above tall green hills.

Through hills and pastures we wound irregularly for several miles to a township called Tsai-kumtan, from the names of two manorial estates. Here we were halted by a procession of villagers who came to greet

us with drums and flags. As I got out of the car, old men and women grabbed both of my hands in greeting while small children danced about with glee.

We continued down the road on foot, with the flags and drums now trailing us, turned across a pasture and under trees to an open lawn near a large dilapidated building, apparently an accessory structure in a rambling estate. A large white canvas plentifully appliqued with "auspicious designs" of wheels and swastikas in dark blue, soared over the greensward like a flying roof, supported by ropes to the building and to trees. This we had learned already to know as the typical Tibetan canopy for a summer picnic, shielding from the direct sun while giving access on all sides to the winds and the view. Under it was set a rectangle of low tables for tea and refreshment, flanked by the typical Tibetan low cushioned seats, made of small, stiff mattresses hinged in the middle, folding back into a double thickness, like an ottoman or large hassock. These are convenient for gatherings, for they are easily carried around, will stand on uneven ground without wobbling, and can either seat two or three people at the height of a Western-style sofa, or double that number if they are opened out to the height of a mattress. Their worn, rather soiled exteriors were quickly covered for us with gay, hand-woven rugs, and the total effect was that of a casual but festive banquet-hall on grass surrounded by trees.

The procession scattered to stand around the edges of this festive enclosure while we were introduced to

the leaders: Puntso, five months ago a household slave, now a committee member of the Peasants' Association of the township, already assuming functions of local government; Purbu, chairman of the Peasants' Association of this *chika,* or manor, formerly a serf of the type we were to know as *duichun*; and Wangtu, another committee member of the township Peasants' Association, a former lama who had left the monastic life. In a short opening speech — it had to be short since it was twice translated, first into Chinese, then into Western languages — Puntso told us that the township Peasants' Association had three branches, one in a big manor named Tsai, a second which included two manors, of which this Kumtan was one, while the third included three smaller estates.

The township comprised 1,172 souls in 329 households. Of these sixty-nine families had been the type of serf known as *tsaiba,* (or *chaba,* or *thralba,* for the dialect varied from village to village) who had relatively stable plots of land for their own use, for which they paid the lord by a definite amount of labor. One hundred and seventeen families were *duichuns,* (also pronounced *dudchhungs*), serfs whose less stable land holdings were paid for by a proportion of the crop. One hundred and thirty were *lantzams,* (or *nansens* or *nantsams*), serfs of house and field who hardly differed from slaves. (Thirteen were families of the upper strata.)

The cultivated land of the township was given as 7,923 *kes.* A *ke* is a measure of grain, which seemed

to vary from twenty-seven to thirty pounds, and a *ke* of land is the amount of land a *ke* of grain will sow. We worked it out as roughly the size of a Chinese *mou,* one sixth of an acre. There were thus somewhat more than thirteen hundred cultivated acres. These had belonged to thirteen manorial lords, a term including both noble families and also monasteries. Four of the nobles and five of the monasteries had joined the rebellion. Their lands were therefore confiscated and their crops would go this very year to the serfs who tilled them. These serfs, however, were no longer serfs, for serfdom had been abolished by the resolution adopted July 17th by the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, in other words, the local government of Tibet. Since that time, the peasants had been organizing their local governments by village and township, preparing for the future elections which should set up a permanent structure of an autonomous Tibet, and work out the final land reform.

The Kumtan manor in which we stood, and the lands and serfs around it, had belonged to Khemey, one of the bigger nobles of Tibet whose family had been in government for generations, and who owned many manors and serfs. Khemey had been one of the Dalai Lama's emissaries to the conference in Peking which signed the 1951 Agreement for the "peaceful liberation of Tibet". Later Khemey had been a secret and still later an open organizer of the rebellion, and had gone with the Dalai Lama to India. He had not resided

on this manor, and in fact, had not often even visited it, despite its nearness to Lhasa. He left his various manors to his stewards and busied himself with higher politics. He had owned in this township not only the manor but two of the smaller monasteries.

Wondering just how a person could own a monastery, I asked: "You mean that Khemey helped finance them, contributed to their support?"

"Not exactly," was the answer. "We mean that the monastery contributed to Khemey. The monastery collected gifts from the people, and also made loans at high interest, and Khemey got five times the share of a lama, of whatever the monastery took in."

Khemey had owned 303 souls in this manor, counting the children. He had twenty-two *tsaiba* families, forty-five *duichun* families and eighteen *nantsam* families. Every year they sowed 2,500 *kes* (420 acres) of land. Of these about 96 acres were managed by Khemey's steward directly, with the *nantsams* doing the labor; twenty-two acres were allotted to twenty-two *tsaiba* families in return for labor, and the remaining three hundred and more acres were rented out to *tsaiba* and *duichuns* and paid for by a part of the crop. The official terms for these rentals did not sound onerous, being around one fourth of the crop, but when the serfs finally paid what they owed on seed loans, implements and cattle loans and food loans, all at exorbitant interest, about seventy percent of what they took in went to Khemey, either as rent for land and house, or in payments on debts.

All three types of serfs were subject to the lord's orders, to forced labor of various kinds, to flogging for whatever the lord considered misconduct. All had to get permission to marry or to leave the manor for even a short absence. If a lord had a serf tortured or even killed, the lord would not be punished. Yet within the three types of serfs there were differences. "*Tsaibas* and *duichuns* were like subjects of the lord while the *nantsams* were like his slaves," explained Puntso. "*Tsaibas* and *duichuns* usually had homes which they were allowed to build on the land of the lord, and which they occupy continuously by custom, though the houses of course belong to the lord on whose land they are built. *Nantsams* do not usually have homes; they sleep in kitchens and store-rooms and stables and out-buildings. They can seldom maintain stable families, in part because they have no place to live and in part because the lord may send husband or wife to work in another manor whenever he chooses. *Tsaibas* and *duichuns* can in part organize their own work, though they may be taken from it for many occasions of forced labor; but *nantsams* do not organize their own work, since they are working all the hours of the day under the orders of the lord's steward. *Nantsams* also are sometimes sold or given as presents. If the daughter of a lord marries, she takes some *nantsams* with her to her new home as her dowry, but the *tsaibas* and *duichuns* are not thus taken for they stay with the land."

Deidji, former slave now cheerful "activist", with her husband

Hopeful youth in village east of Lhasa

"Between *tsaibas* and *duichuns* the main difference is that the *tsaibas* pay for their land by labor while the *duichuns* pay with part of the crop. *Tsaibas* are also more stable; they are listed as part of the land in all of the land deeds since the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama. *Duichuns* are more recent; many of them are runaway serfs from other areas or lamas expelled or fleeing from monasteries, and since no commoner could exist in Tibet without a master, they found their new master here. If the former master finds them, he can take them back, but more often they send him a poll-tax and he lets them stay."

From this description I gathered that the *tsaibas* seemed an original serf-class, from the early days when the nomad tribes settled to the land and the chief apportioned plots to his retainers in return for their duties to him; that *nantsams* derived from a past time of chattel slavery, but that *duichuns* indicated the disintegration of serfdom, the faint beginnings of free enterprise. So I asked: "Could one say that *duichuns* are like the tenant farmers in the rest of China before the liberation?"

The local leaders shook their heads and Puntso replied: "No, for tenant farmers could leave the land but *duichuns* cannot except by running away which is perilous. Moreover the lord can reduce *tsaiba* and *duichuns* to *nantsams* if he likes. It is not customary and not considered proper for the lord to do this without reason. But he can force the *duichuns* into many kinds of debt, and there is even one kind of debt that

can never be paid, but which bears high interest forever. And when *tsaibas* or *duichuns* cannot pay their debts, then the lord can take away their houses and possessions and livestock if they have any, and turn them into *nantsams. . .*"

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After this short briefing, our party of correspondents split into several groups and went to visit the newly liberated peasants in their homes. I chose to go first with an energetic, intelligent-looking woman of forty-one named Deidji, a former *nantsam,* who was now vice-chairman of the Township Peasants' Association, hence practically a member of the new local government. She was dressed in her best for the occasion, in a dark jumper of rough home-made wool known as *pulu* over a white shirt of some heavy homespun material, and decorated by an apron similarly hand-woven in stripes of many gay colors. She wore a bracelet of bone on her right wrist and a bright woven band around her hair.

As we went along through archways and across rough courtyards of cobblestones and earth, a crowd of children followed who, when they saw my camera, were all so ready to be photographed that it was difficult to get any individual poses or small groups. Serfdom had marked their small bodies with malnutrition, but their eagerness of soul had responded very quickly to the excitements of five short months of freedom. With us came also several men carrying some of the mattress-cushions for our further use.

Among them I met Deidji's husband, ten years older than she, and somewhat taller, with a coat and trousers similarly of *pulu,* a shirt similarly of homespun, to which he had added tall leather boots and a broad-brimmed hat of woven straw.

Through a door that opened directly from a stable courtyard we entered what Deidji called "our nice new home, given us just seven days ago". When I saw the place I thought she was indulging in irony, but when I saw the pride with which she said: "It used to be a store-house for yak-dung, but the Peasants' Association cleaned it out and gave it to us," I knew that she admired the place.

Coming in from the bright sun it was too dark to see at first clearly, but soon I made out a room about eight by ten feet in size, with a dirt floor, and walls of rock and earth, and with two openings in the wall each about eighteen inches square which let in air and light, and which were crossed by bars to keep out large animals. Since the wall was thick and the openings not very high, they let in what for me seemed insufficient light; and since they had no glass, I judged they might at times let in too much of the air. There was no furniture except a bed of boards in a corner, covered by a black yak-skin, a neat heap of clothing and other possessions near the entrance door, a small wooden bench and a pot hanging on a nail. Poor and bare as it was, I understood Deidji's pride in it when I later saw the place from which she had moved: a similar store-room of earth and rock, but only half the

size and with a single window-opening, and a roof so leaky that the floor of earth was often soaked from rain and took a long time to dry. To Deidji this eight by ten dim shelter of rock and earth was "a nice, dry home".

Mattress-cushions were brought and piled on the floor and we sat down with Deidji, her husband Puntso-tserem, two interpreters and all the other listeners that could crowd in, to hear Deidji's story of their former way of life, and of their hopes for their two children, a son aged twenty-one and a daughter of eight.

"We worked for the lord all the daylight hours and all the days in the year," said Deidji. "I first cleaned floors and furniture in the manor and then I worked in the fields in sowing and harvest, and helped to level the ground by dragging wooden plates from my shoulders. I also tended seventeen yaks and cows and milked them when they were fresh. I carried butter and cheese on my back to the lord's house in Lhasa. In slack time I spun wool." To this the man added that he had worked as a groom, caring for eight mules and transporting barley and salt and *tsamba* and yak-dung to Lhasa and fodder for Khemey's horses in the city. The son had worked for the lord as a shepherd from the age of fifteen.

"For this work," continued Deidji, "the lord gave us every month two *kes* of *tsamba* for each of us (fifty pounds of barley flour) and every year enough *pulu* for a suit of clothes, and also a pair of boots. The children got nothing; we fed them from our own

tsamba. When our son became a shepherd he also got two *kes* of *tsamba.* He was promised clothes but he never got them. Before he was a shepherd he worked on the manor and was promised one and a half *kes* of *tsamba* but never got it. So since we did not have enough food, we had to go in debt."

"Did you get any food besides *tsamba*?" we asked.

"We got yak butter, but not the real butter. When the lamas in the lord's monasteries had buttered tea, part of the butter floats to the top when the tea is churned and this is thrown away. They throw it into a pail for the serfs. Of this 'butter' we got one and a half pounds a month but not always. Only when enough was thrown away. We also got tea leaves but only after they had been used for several stewings of tea. At New Year's Festival we got some meat and vegetables. They made a feast of noodles with shreds of meat and turnips cooked in them. For the first five days of the festival we had two meals a day. There was not very much meat in it. There were twenty-three *nantsam* families on this manor, and we got one yak leg for all the twenty-three. Sometimes if a sheep or a cow died, we would get it. Otherwise we had just *tsamba* all the year.

"We never got a coin of money from the lord, but we had to have a coin and also a *hata* (ceremonial scarf) to give the lord if we asked his permission to marry or for absence. At these times we had to buy tobacco and tea and a *hata* to present our request. So, since we did not have enough food from the work we did

for the lord, we looked for ways to get more. We asked the lord's steward to rent some land to us to grow our own food. *Nantsam* do not have this right, because all their daylight hours belong to the lord. But we gave *hatas* and appealed three times and they let us rent four *kes* of land (two thirds of an acre).

"We paid two and a half *kes* (75 lbs) for the rent of the land, but actually it was more. For the lord kept a false measure and also when the grain was sent to him to sample, he kept the sample. So we paid really almost four *kes* of grain. We worked all daylight on the lord's land and at night we worked our own land. Sometimes we got friends to do our service so that we could work our land. We also had to plough our land and we had no animal so we paid thirty taels for an animal for two days (about sixty cents). In a good harvest we could get eleven *kes* of grain, in a bad harvest only six or seven and in an average harvest nine *kes*. The harvest depended also on our work, and we had little working-time. So an average harvest would pay for the rent and the seed and the ploughing, and a good harvest would give us extra food, but with a poor harvest we went still more in debt."

The husband then took up his special story. "Once Khemey's daughter came out to stay in the manor. She had a fine saddle and she required good care, so I took her saddle up to the second floor. (The upper class live on the second floor, the first floor being for storage rooms and servants' rooms.) Two or three

months later the steward called me and said that the saddle had disappeared and also some woolen pieces and he accused that I was a thief. For a whole day he flogged me with a heavy whip, demanding that I confess. Many times such accusations were falsely made against serfs and they were flogged to confessing. But I would not confess, for I thought the steward stole the saddle himself.

"When I would not confess, they threw me into the jail here." (Manors had private jails in cellars without light and with no conveniences for washing or relieving nature, but only a floor of earth and rock.) They took me out and flogged me again. Three times they did this till the flesh came off the back of my thighs, and scars remain to this day. When I still did not confess they took me to the court at the Potala Palace and put me in jail there for nine months. The steward sealed my house and flogged my wife and seventy-year-old mother and put them out of the house in the court, without any possessions. When I came back from the Potala jail there were no possessions left." (This was a previous wife; both she and the aged mother were now long since dead.)

"This is the first time we ever heard the serfs' stories," commented a correspondent who had come to visit Deidji with me. "When we were in Tibet in 1955, we only talked with bailiffs and lords, because Peking had an agreement which left the nobles in power. This is probably the first time anyone from outside got to talk to the serfs."

We asked how they lived at present. Deidji answered: "Thanks to the benefaction of the Communist Party we have a good life. We paid no interest for the seed loan and we did not have to give *hatas* and make presents to borrow seed. Since Khemey was a rebel and fled to India, the crop on his land will be ours this year. There is a field of 475 *kes* (79 acres) on which we worked formerly under Khemey's steward. This year we worked it together and share the crop. Every worker has one share, and we have also a half share for our son who worked in the fields this summer before he went to the interior to study. So we shall have two and a half shares from the big field and besides this, we have the crop from our own small plot. The crop will be good this year, for we had time to work it. We shall get at least six times our seed. As soon as this crop comes in we shall have plenty of food."

"All this good life should have been ours eight years ago," said the husband with a touch of bitterness. "But because the lords obstructed it and the *kasha* conspired against it, the good life was stopped till this year. Even yet we cannot say that life is very good, for we do not yet have much buttered tea to drink, but at least when we have it, we drink in quietness, without fear.

"For the lords rebelled against the Central Government and the Central Government deposed them, and the whips and shackles and torture instruments were destroyed by the working people's own hands. When I was thrown in jail here I was shackled and they

made a special wooden handcuff for me that hurt. And now I myself destroyed with my own hands that wooden handcuff.

"And we remember now how the lords told us tales of the Communists and the tales were not true. They said the Communists ate horse meat and dog meat and took the wife from the husband and the children from the parents. And we know now that this is not true. We began to know it when the PLA first built the highway. The lords said the highway was only for the good of the Hans. But the working people found the highway a benefit, and those who worked on the road got paid in money wages, as well as food and clothes and shoes, and they bought themselves golden ear-rings and mules.

"Even then life began to be better for some of the working people, and now it will be better for us at harvest and for our children it will surely be very good. Always I wanted to send my son to school to learn to read and to have some trade like a tailor. This was impossible, but now my son has gone to study in the interior and when he comes back he will be a skilled worker for a factory. He will not be weighed down by all those things that weighed down my head. Even my eight-year-old daughter is going to Lhasa to primary school."

Deidji took up the theme. "In the past there was a sun shining over our heads but it belonged to the lord. Now we have a sun of our own! Even I, at my age, begin to get education. They sent me from the township

as 'observer' to the Preparatory Committee in Lhasa and I heard with my own ears when they declared the democratic reform. I sat there for twenty-one days in the room of the government with the nobles, and I heard them say that *ula* (corvée) is no more, and slavery is no more, and the government will buy the land of the nobles and give it to the tillers, and that even this year, on the rebel lands, the harvest goes to the peasants who sowed it. I heard them say that our Peasants' Associations should become government, for the people must make their own freedom and their own law.

"I heard the Panchen Erdeni himself declare it. I got knowledge for twenty-one days."

She had ducked her head in reverence as she mentioned the Panchen Erdeni, and from this slight bow she began to rock back and forth with her hands in a gesture of prayer while the tears filled her eyes and ran down her cheeks unheeded as she continued: "Only by the benefaction of the Party do I sit here on a cushion in this dry home from which nobody can throw me."

There was not a dry eye in the dark little room when Deidji finished. It was clear why the peasants had chosen her to government. She was a natural spell-binder, a voice for the Tibetan personality, expressing the demands of the people with passion, poetry and fire.

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Anything after Deidji would have been anti-climax, yet we had still to visit other types of serfs. We delayed briefly while Deidji insisted on showing us her former leaky hovel, across the courtyard, so that we might see how much better it is when the dirt floor is dry, and then we went through other courtyards to visit Purbu, a *duichun,* and chairman of the Peasants' Association of the manor.

The house was definitely better than Deidji's; it was built for a house and not for manure storage. Its walls were also of rock and earth and its floor of dirt, but it was nine by twelve in size with an actual glassed window, and it had a kind of porch, also of rock and earth and without roof but with a low rock fence which gave a slight sense of possession and a place to sit. The woman who sat there, however, perched on a small saw-horse and supporting her balance with a cane cut from a peeled bough, was in much worse case than Deidji. She was totally blind, and looked so old and feeble that I took her for Purbu's aged, decrepit and practically dying mother, and could hardly hide my shock when he told me that she was his wife.

She had been a *tsaiba* when Purbu married her, one of the class of serfs whose use of land is fairly steady down the centuries, paid for every year by labor. She had lost her *tsaiba* rights when her blindness made this labor impossible for her. Purbu himself was willing to do this labor for her; in fact, he actually had done it during the period when one eye went out from trachoma while the woman worked on at what-

ever she could do. He was quite willing to keep on doing her labor duty after both eyes went, but the lord's steward decided otherwise, and it was for him, not for Purbu, to decide. Purbu said there wasn't really much difference whether you paid for land by labor or by grain; it was a matter of the lord's convenience and for the serf it was always hard. But it would have been a comfort for his wife to know that even in her blindness, her status as *tsaiba* and her land claim was good.

Purbu had belonged to Tasilhumpo Monastery, in the Panchen Erdeni's area, many days' journey away; in fact, he belonged there still and paid an annual poll-tax for his release. One of the neighbors said Purbu had been a lama, who left the monastery to marry. Purbu himself only told us that he had run away and settled here. Purbu had clearly a story of inner tragedy, but whether it was another woman that he had married and lost, or whether this one had been attractive in youth, or whether he married her because she was a widow with a bit of land who needed a man, we never learned. Nor did we learn whether Purbu considered her blindness a judgement on him for leaving the monastery. All this was his affair.

Anyway, here he was on Kumtan Manor, paying his poll-tax to Tasilhumpo for permission, and paying in grain and some *ula* labor to Khemey for the use of house and land. That had been his lot until the past few months. Now he was a free man, chairman of

the peasants' association of the manor, which implied some ability.

What Purbu chiefly gave us was an insight into the book-keeping of land and grain. He cultivated eight *kes* of land (about one and two thirds acres). He used eight *kes* of seed grain, (about 216 pounds) and he got about thirty-two *kes* of grain at harvest, four times the seed. He paid in rent eight *kes* of grain, which at first did not seem excessive, being apparently only one fourth of the total crop. But Purbu explained that the lord had different measuring baskets for seed given out and crop taken in. The payments to the lord were in "big *ke*", several pounds more than the ordinary *ke*; moreover, you had to send samples of grain to the lord at harvest, and he kept the samples. Then Purbu owed heavy interest on the seed he borrowed and the food and implements he also borrowed from the lord.

"So, when the harvest came," said Purbu, "it never quite covered the bills. We have a saying: 'When the threshing is over, the grain disappears'. That is how it was with me."

There were some small accounts, both in income and in payment, besides the main harvest. Purbu got income from the straw which he sold for fodder or used himself for his two mules; he also gathered the mule dung and dried it and sold it for fuel. Against this he had expenses. He owed the poll-tax to the monastery, and he owed to Khemey, not the full *ula* duties of a *tsaiba,* but nonetheless certain labor duties, which *duichuns* owed. He had to give the lord three

days work at harvest, and two days in the repair of ditches, and in any flood emergency he had to work as long as might be needed without pay.

There was also payment in *ula* to be made for owning animals. Each of Purbu's two mules must work two days for the lord at harvest, and at New Year's Festival they must carry fuel to Lhasa, so many loads that it took several days. The lord could also impose temporary *ula.* Last autumn when the rebels were killing and looting in Loka, and Khemey had an estate there, he made his Loka serfs transport his harvest half way to Lhasa and he made his Kumtan serfs bring it the rest of the way. He wanted to get his grain out of "the disturbance" which his own followers made.

"If you have chickens," continued Purbu, "every hen pays *ula,* giving five eggs to the lord several times a year".

"If *duichuns* have all these payments, is it better to be a *duichun* or a *nantsam*?" I asked.

"The main difference," said Purbu, "is in the amount of freedom. I have two mules and even though they pay an *ula* tax to the lord, yet they are my mules. I have a house and land by rent, and even though the rent is high and the harvest quickly goes, and even though the lord can take me for *ula* from time to time, yet most of the time I can arrange my own work. This is not possible to a *nantsam,* all of whose hours of work belong to the lord."

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Across the road from Purbu's house was the house of a *tsaiba* named Ngoju. It was a step above Purbu's house, for though it also was of rock and earth with a dirt floor, it was larger, about ten by fifteen feet in size, and had two rooms, with two windows of real glass. Its small rock porch was also larger and on it handicraft went on. Members of the family made packages of pine twigs to sell in Lhasa, where they are burned as incense in festivities.

Ngoju told us he got this relatively large house because there were four adult workers in his family, himself, his wife and two grown sons. They received ten *kes* ($1\frac{2}{3}$ acres) of allotted land for these four adults, and paid for it by giving the full time labor of one person throughout the year. When his sons were smaller, and he had only two adult workers, he got half the land, and paid half the labor. The serf fed himself when he labored for the lord, because he was paid by land for this labor.

"When you work half the time for the lord," I asked, "who chooses which days you work?"

"The lord chooses them," replied Ngoju, "but there is a custom. The lord is not supposed to take all the days at harvest; it is custom that he takes five days and then gives five days to the serf. The lord does not always do this. If he wants labor, he demands it and there is nothing the serf can do. So it is better to have four workers in the family and give one of them full time to the lord."

Other peasants had joined us on Ngoju's porch and discussion began about the different kinds of serfs and how these came to be. *Tsaiba,* they said, had always been and they were listed with the land in all the land deeds for generations past. N*antsam* also had always been, but they were not always with the land, for they might be sold or given away, or go with a daughter of the lord when she married, and took *nantsam* with her as dowry. *Duichuns* were mostly not local people but had run away from a bad master somewhere else, and sought another master here.

"A man had to have a master in the old Tibet," they said, "otherwise he was an outlaw."

Duichuns, thus, seem the beginning of disintegration of serfdom, the beginning of a small, and illusory freedom. A serf ran away, left home and friends, took great risks of recapture and flogging and even death, to find at a great distance, another master who might be better. Yet if the old master found him, he might be taken back, though often the old master agreed to accept a poll-tax for release. *Duichuns* had been increasing in Tibet.

Discussion turned to the way in which the lord could make one kind of serf into another kind. "When runaways come," said one man, "the lord often takes them as *nantsam* instead of *duichun.* But if a man is strong, and looks as if he might run away again, then the lord lets him be a *duichun.*"

"*Nantsam* are a kind of slave," said another, "and some have been *nantsam* for generations but others

were *tsaiba* or *duichun* who fell into debt to the lord which they could not pay. Then the lord took their house and mules and chickens for the debt and made them into *nantsam.*"

One of the men present had been a *tsaiba* who was made into a *nantsam* by the lord but who later became a *tsaiba* again. I asked how this occurred.

"I was *tsaiba* on a manor owned by Khemey, and disputes arose and the steward moved some of the serfs to another manor. I had no land-right at this other manor so they made me a *nantsam* there. But later I got some savings and Khemey allowed me to be *tsaiba* again and have a piece of land."

"How could you get saving as a *nantsam*?" I asked.

"The People's Liberation Army came to the area," he replied, "and they needed yak-dung for fuel so the price of yak-dung went up. I collected yak-dung and sold it to the PLA and got enough money to buy a big gold ear-ring. (Tibetan men think it very jaunty to have a single ring, at least an inch in diameter, swinging from a smaller clasp in the ear.) "When I was summoned to the manor-house I hid the ear-ring but of course they knew of it. So Khemey's son-in-law flogged me, he said for disobedience, but I knew it was for daring to have an ear-ring. Then he said: 'Now I'll make you *tsaiba* again and you will put your money into my land.' He meant that if I had money I should pay it for mules and seed."

Everyone was impressed by this tale for a *nantsam* who rose by savings was a rarity. The others thought,

however, that Khemey would not have made him a *tsaiba* unless he had been one formerly, that "regular *nantsam*" would hardly be allowed to rise. There were exceptions even to this; a groom by winning races with his lord's colors might become a "favorite" and be indulged. *Tsaiba* or *duichun* might rise or fall, for their income depended on the harvest. *Tsaiba* with several small children might easily go into debt to feed them and be made *nantsam.*

A few *tsaiba,* not more than three in a hundred, they thought, became well enough off to have serfs of their own. They did this by "adopting" into their family some runaway stranger, and using him to do their labor service for the lord. A *tsaiba* who showed this characteristic might be in line for becoming a steward or bailiff, rising through the exploitation of other serfs.

VIII. LHALU'S SERFS ACCUSE

A few miles westward from Lhasa we turned on a dirt road into a rather unkempt rural area and presently drew up at a large, rambling and untidy manor-house that had recently belonged to Lhalu Tsewong-Dorje, commander-in-chief of the March rebellion in Lhasa. We were bound for an accusation meeting of the *san fan* campaign, in which Lhalu's former serfs would accuse.

Lhalu's family was not of the "old nobility" in Tibet; it did not, like Apei's, trace lineage back a thousand years to ancient kings. It had produced the eighth and twelfth incarnations of the Dalai Lama and thus attained nobility. In the century or two since then it had grown powerful and wealthy, and had possessed twenty-two manorial estates, of which this in the western district of Lhasa was one. Lhalu himself had held some of the highest posts in Tibet's local government. He had been one of the six *kaloons* who made up the *kasha,* the local secular government under the Dalai Lama; it was said that he had bribed the *kasha* in 1945 with two hundred and fifty thousand taels of silver for the post. He had then become both secretary and vice-chairman of the *kasha* at different times and in 1947 had been appointed governor of Chamdo, that dis-

puted province between Tibet and Szechuan which Tibetan warlords had taken from Szechuan warlords some years earlier. Replaced in this governorship in 1950 by Apei, who soon thereafter lost Chamdo to the People's Liberation Army, Lhalu had then been appointed under Apei as one of the plenipotentiaries for the Dalai Lama to negotiate with Peking the 1951 Agreement for the "Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" as an integral part of the newly formed People's Republic of China.

Some of the signers of the Agreement took it sincerely; Lhalu did not. He continued to hold high post in Tibet's local government — the Agreement had provided that this government would not be changed — and was governor of grain supply in 1957. His plotting for Tibet's secession from China continued; it had a history of years. Recent accusations made before a mass meeting of ten thousand people in Lhasa had implicated him in the murder of Rabchen, the Dalai Lama's first regent, and of the progressive Living Buddha Geda, both of whom opposed secession and had been killed for this not long before the liberation. Evidence of Lhalu's participation had been filed with the courts and would be considered later. The accusation meeting which we were to visit was a local affair, a hearing on Lhalu's treatment of his local serfs. It was being held under the Fourth Inhabitants' Committee of the Western District of Lhasa.

Leaving our cars in the walled-in stable-yard, we passed through an entrance hall guarded by several

soldiers and came to a large open court enclosed on all sides by the columns and porches of a two storey mansion. A large, close-packed crowd of men, women and children — we were told there were eight hundred — was seated on the stone flags of the courtyard. At the moment they were shouting and raising their right arms in the air. At the far end of the court several people sat on chairs behind a table, clearly in charge of the meeting as a sort of "tribunal" whose powers we were yet to know. A score or more people, including a half dozen soldiers, looked down on the audience from a wide porch that ran along part of the second storey. Above them, at roof level, a large canvas had been stretched to protect the meeting from weather, but this only covered the "tribunal" and the front half of the audience, leaving the rest under an open, overcast sky.

"Lhalu, confess! Repent!" the crowd was shouting, Lhalu himself stood facing them, between them and the "tribunal". An angry peasant woman near him was denouncing him for his crimes. Lhalu, a man of forty-three, with black hair indicating his prime, seemed in good health but standing in a rather odd way. He was bowing from the waist so low that his trunk was at right angles to his legs, and he had dropped his hands to his knees to support this rather difficult position. His arms trembled slightly and he sweated, either from exertion or the strain of the accusation. The posture, we were told, was that customary in Tibet for any accused person facing a formal accusation.

Lhalu was the accused; his former serfs were accusers.

The accuser as we entered was a woman of perhaps forty years, in a brown dress of coarse homespun wool, made jumper-style and displaying the contrasting red sleeves of an under-blouse. "Lhalu!" she said, "you did to death my husband and children! You flogged my husband and threw him into your cellar jail and he died there! You took my son for a slave and he died of hunger and heavy labor. My two small children died of their hard life. I had five children; only two are left!"

We found seats prepared for us in the front area behind the "tribunal" and our interpreters began to explain the proceedings in whispers. The first woman was quickly followed by a second, who wore a woolen gown of shabby black over sleeves of bright green, with a frazzled scarlet ribbon in her hair. Her name was Lingchen. She also declared that Lhalu had killed her husband, but the details were different. Ten men, of whom her husband was one, were given orders by the *kasha* to fetch willow wood for firewood and they had to go so far and the delivery took so long that her husband was late in his attendance on Lhalu. For this Lhalu had him beaten into unconsciousness and left on the ground some distance away where he was found by peasants late at night and brought to his home. He was put to bed and lingered in bed a few weeks and died.

At this point in the accusation a youth who had been sitting near the woman, and who was possibly the son

of the man who had died from flogging, jumped to his feet and tried to reach Lhalu to strike him. Others in the crowd restrained him, dragged him back and argued with him. The brief diversion this created was used by one of the chairmen to tell us that this meeting had no right to punish Lhalu, or even to pass sentence on him.

"Any judgment against Lhalu must come from the regular courts," he said, "though evidence may be used from this meeting. This meeting is not primarily to condemn Lhalu but to teach his former serfs that they are now the masters and need not fear their former lord. It is a first step towards organizing democratic self-government. The serfs must learn to speak out, to expose their injuries, to find the cause of their long misery not in some *karma* from a past incarnation as they were always told, but in the evil system of serfdom which must be destroyed. From these meetings begins the organization of a Peasants' Association which will then become local government at township and then at county scale. The meeting today will take one specific step towards government; we shall here destroy the old title deeds of feudal debt which were recently outlawed by the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region."

In gaps between speeches, I looked at the crowd. They seemed far more poverty-stricken than would easily be found in any Western nation. Many looked old and gaunt, with dark, worn faces, but when they were excited to speech they seemed not as old in years

as in the first impression. They were people who loved color and ornament. This appeared in a pink cotton shirt, in bright blue, green or red sleeves of under-blouses, in scarlet hair-ribbons, in brassy ear-rings. Even some of the men displayed a single large "golden" circle as an ear-ring. Many of the women held babies or small children.

At high points in an accusation, a man or woman would jump up in the audience and lead off in a shouted slogan. "Lhalu! Bend down and confess! If you sincerely repent, the people may be lenient!" . . . "Lhalu! Consider your past! Now we have stood up!"

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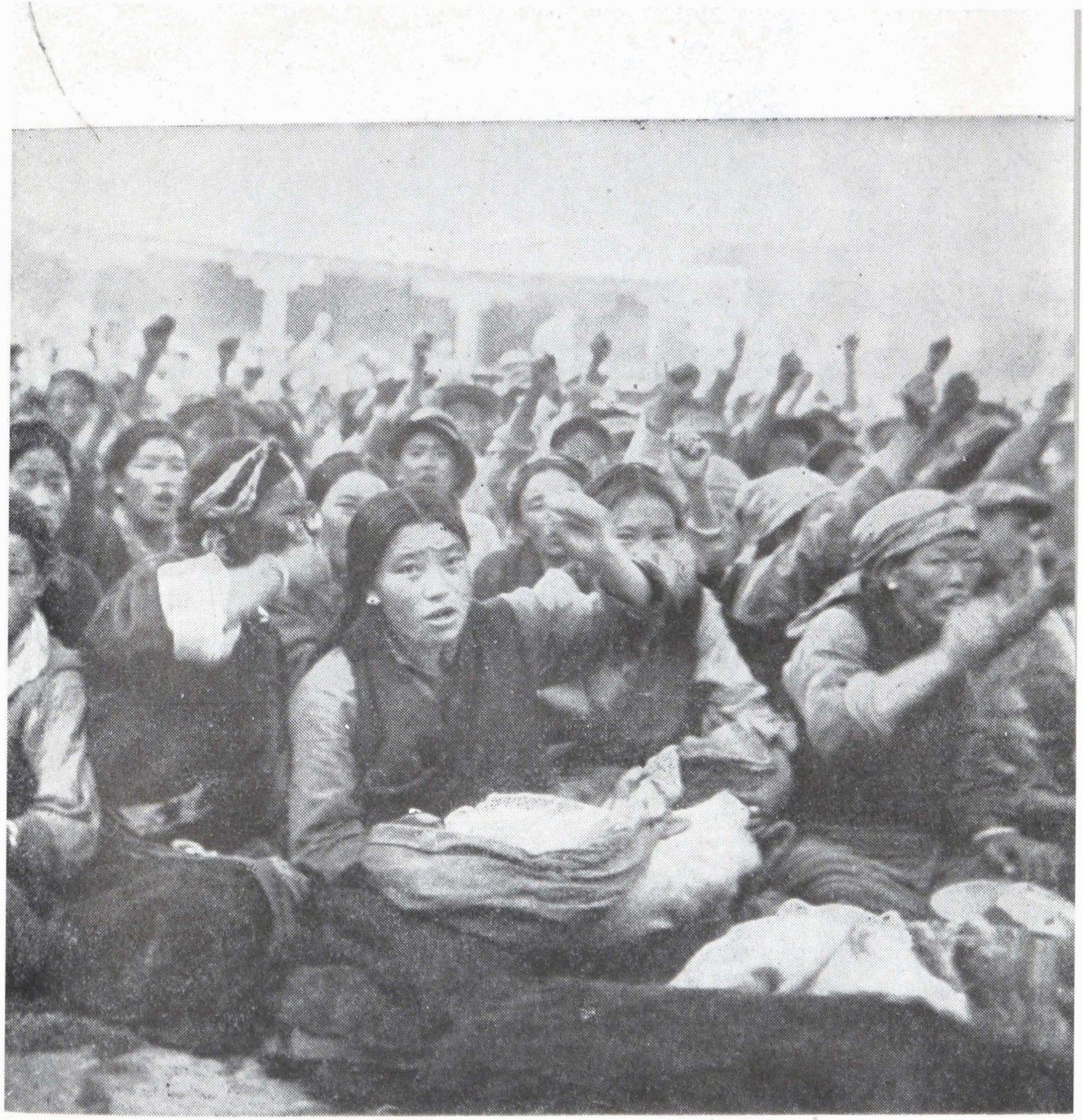
A crippled man of fifty-seven years named Habu hobbled forward; his back was twisted above the waist. He spoke violently, a violence contrasting with his physical weakness. His charges went back many years to a time when Lhalu built a new mansion on another manorial estate and ordered extra labor duty from his serfs. Lhalu ordered every household to bring him nine hundred big rocks and nine hundred earthen blocks for the building, and he paid them one *ping* of silver for every hundred blocks. "But we could not carry these blocks to your manor so we had to hire carters and this cost us for transport ten times what you paid."

"I was your *tsaiba*, and I owed you labor duty, but my father had died and my household lacked one worker, so I did not owe you as much *ula* duty as you enforced."



"Confess! Repent!" shout 800 former serfs

Woman serf accuses Lhalu in "accusation meeting"

Feudal debt-titles burn in Lhalu's courtyard

Another man supplemented the testimony of the crippled man and the meeting brought out the statistics of the hamlet in which the exploitation had taken place. There had been seventy-eight households, and twenty-five were *tsaiba,* and forty-eight were *duichun,* who, since they paid for land with grain, owed a much smaller labor service. Five families were "freed from labor duty", one of them because a past ancestor had done a signal service to the "King of the Law", and been "freed from labor duty with all his descendants forever", and the other four because their daughters had been taken to give service in song and dance at the feasts of the *kasha,* and the families had therefore no other labor duty.

"But all these seventy-eight families were forced by you to do this work," the crippled man declared, shaking his fist at Lhalu.

It was clear that, even under serfdom, there were supposed to be limits to exploitation, enforced by custom. It was equally clear that when a master chose to demand more from the serf than was his due by custom, there was nothing the serf could do but obey. But the memory of the community kept account of what Lhalu had done as "injustice", and brought it up against him after long years. The memory had no doubt been kept fresh since the compulsion to hire carters had put households in debt from which many had not recovered in subsequent years.

Another source of the ancient debts became clear when a white-haired man came forward. From his

manner he seemed very old and feeble but he said that he was sixty-two. He began softly, even a bit timidly: "Do you remember me, Lhalu? I was your *tsaiba* and I had two *kes* of land, (about two thirds of an acre). One *ke* was free from labor duty but there was labor duty on the other. You ordered me to take care of a hall for religious services, and then you sent me to other work and when I returned to the hall two silver butter-lamps had disappeared. For this you accused me and demanded that I pay sixty *ping* of silver for the butter-lamps though such lamps cost only ten *ping* apiece. But your steward said these were very fine lamps and I must pay sixty *ping*.

"So I had to sell my two horses and they were worth more than the butter-lamps but the steward gave me only nineteen *ping* for them, and I sold my wife's clothes and ornaments and he gave me only four *ping* for them though they were worth nineteen. So when this was not enough I went to borrow from an under-steward and he lent me thirty *ping* at sixteen percent. Thus I became a beggar without horses and my wife without ornaments and with debt that could never be paid. Then you took me to the religious hall and made me pray before the new butter-lamps, and when I had prayed I lifted my eyes and they were the same butter-lamps that you said I had stolen. And I knew that you had ruined me, not for stealing, but for my two horses and the ornaments of my wife. . . .

"Do you remember me, Lhalu? My life has been

ruined to this day. But now again I live, for I see you a prisoner here."

Lhalu seemed to shrink from the old man as he had not shrunk from more violent accusations. He muttered something. I asked: "Does he confess?" "He confesses partly," said the interpreter. "He says he has made mistakes and sometimes punished unduly. He does not confess enough. The people are not satisfied."

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So many accounts of floggings were given by younger men who had worked for Lhalu as stable grooms that it became difficult to disentangle their stories later and know how many grooms had spoken and which floggings had been given to which man. It was clear that Lhalu, like other serf-owners, had a large number of *nantsam*, and that those who were house and stable slaves, being in frequent contact with their master, were quickly detected in misdemeanors and at once flogged, and sometimes also cast for periods of various lengths into the "private jail" which all manorial estates maintained in their cellars. One man, for instance, declared that he had been attacked by drunken Tibetan soldiers on one occasion while waiting at night in Lhasa for his master, and later Lhalu had him flogged for "fighting with soldiers".

The most vocal of these grooms was a man apparently in his late twenties, nattily dressed with leather accessories, a big golden circlet in one ear and a wrist watch which he took some pains to display. His name

was Dusu and he had been many times flogged and also thrown into jail for as long as forty-nine days.

Once it was the affair of the Indian saddle. Lhalu went often to Lhasa to parties held by the *kasha*. On one such occasion he ordered the groom to prepare the fine Indian saddle. But after the horse was ready, Lhalu changed his mind and decided that since the occasion was a religious one, he should have the Tibetan saddle instead. He ordered the saddle changed.

"It took much time to change this saddle for it had much fringed cloth and a new cover had to be cut to fit. I was not ready in time, so they flogged me and jailed me with chains on my legs for a month."

On another occasion, when Dusu had to wait in Lhasa late at night for his master, he "warmed himself with a little wine at an inn". Lhalu quickly observed this and had him beaten with fifty lashes and thrown into jail in handcuffs for forty-nine days. When he came from jail, Lhalu made him bring fifty big rocks for building, and construct a wall in five days by himself without any aid. Being exhausted from jail he strained himself with the heavy rocks, because he feared another lashing if he did not finish the work on time. He suffered from this strain for a long time.

Dusu was then given strict orders never to go to Lhasa without permission. "But when the festival of lamps came, I went to Lhasa because this is the great prayer festival to which all go. . . . For this, Lhalu put shackles on my feet and made me do service in shackles, climbing the steep stairs to serve him on the

upper floor. Then he threw me in jail again till he needed me to race his horses."

Dusu stated that he himself, in his time of service, had witnessed fifty-seven floggings and also knew of twenty-three people who had been "traded away from their homes or exiled on the roads". He said that household and stable serfs who attended Lhalu personally, were expected to have good clothes, and that most masters furnished such clothes but Lhalu didn't, so the serfs went in debt to buy good clothes.

Dusu also gave data on the food of the *nantsam,* the house and field serfs who worked full time for the master and had no other source of food. They were supposed to get twenty *kes* (550 pounds) of barley a year, but they did not get this full amount. The ration was given in the form of barley meal, the *tsamba* which is the staple food of Tibet and this was adulterated and expanded in the grinding so that the final sacks were not the full ration. Moreover, the serfs had to bring it on their backs three sacks in summer, three sacks in winter from Lhalu's manor in Shigatse, which was several days' journey away, and in summer they sweated so that the barley got wet and sticky and spoiled soon. "Only the winter barley was good," declared Dusu. Of butter they were supposed to get three *kes*,[1] (twenty-three pounds) but they never did.

[1] A *ke* of grain is 27.5 pounds in the small measure used in giving to serfs, up to 35 pounds in the big measure with which the lord collects. A *ke* of butter is 7.7 pounds. Barley expands in grinding, so that twenty *kes* produce over 30 *kes* of meal.

In good years they got perhaps ten pounds, but in the past year they got almost no butter because Lhalu gave it to the rebel troops.

There was at no time any cross-questioning and little attempt to check the accuracy of the charges. It was often hard to tell whether Lhalu or his steward had personally done the action of which the complaint was made. Some accusers seemed to blame him in person for all the evils of serfdom, while others made distinction between acts that were "proper" under the customs of serfdom, and other acts that violated what had been considered the serfs' rights. Not all the testimony was of equal value if this had been a court determining Lhalu's personal guilt. Dusu, among others, was clearly a man who liked to dramatize himself, and who might have been found by any master a rather "intractable slave". What he called "warming himself with a glass of wine" could easily have been held by Lhalu to be "getting drunk on duty".

These details, which might have been important in a court, were not important for the purpose of this meeting. What was important was that serfs give voice to grievances that had piled up in their voiceless souls for years. These grievances were endless. It was impossible to translate all details during the meeting. Two interpreters therefore gave their full time to making notes, which they gave us later at the guesthouse, and from which we corrected and expanded our data.

We thus learned of Chutsa, a *tsaiba*, whose house had been robbed and who asked permission to leave the manor to hunt the robbers. Lhalu replied, angrily: "Are your affairs more important than mine?" and Chutsa was beaten for even asking to leave his work. Chutsa's daughter had been taken into the manor-house as housemaid. Once when she washed Lhalu's handkerchiefs and hung them out to dry, a handkerchief had been blown away by the wind. For this the girl was flogged. Incidents like this seemed numberless and testified to the bleakness of the ancient Tibetan "way of life".

While the former serfs were encouraged to tell their sufferings, and were supported by shouting of slogans, it was clear that there were limits and that these were understood. Not only had the youth who tried to strike Lhalu been pulled back by the other peasants, but none of the shouted slogans demanded Lhalu's death. Even those peasants who claimed that Lhalu had "murdered" their nearest and dearest, were not asking death in return. The usual demand was: "Confess! Repent!". Once there was a shout: "Destroy this rebel head," but this was at once followed by other slogans which seemed to indicate that it was Lhalu's power that must be destroyed rather than his physical body. They cried: "Destroy the documents of the old power! Destroy the instruments of torture! Destroy the cheating measures and the deeds of debt!" It was clear that the policy and limits in the slogans had been carefully worked out and explained in advance.

At times some response was forced from Lhalu. On some charges he admitted that he had been "too harsh", had "a touchy temper", had "made mistakes" or "gone to excess". "He confesses partly," said the interpreter, "but he does not confess enough. The people are not satisfied."

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The meeting grew restless, expectant. Suddenly a loud shout rose like a war cry from the audience: "Burn the debts! Burn the debts!" A tall rather imposing man came in from the door that connected the manor-house with the courtyard. He was in his shirt-sleeves, dragging a huge basket full of papers, with which he was at once helped by many willing hands. Lhalu's steward was bringing in the "titles of debts". He dragged the basket to the rear part of the courtyard which was open to the sky. Several more boxes of papers followed. The accusations stopped and the people all turned in their seats and began to face not Lhalu and the "tribunal" but the steward and the boxes and baskets of debts. Implements of torture and great whips were also brought in and heaped near the basket.

The steward began to read the titles of papers and drop the papers on the stone flags of the court, where they rapidly grew into a large pile. "Contract for *ula* labor" . . . "Poll-Tax" . . . "Grain Debt for Seed". Some of these debts went back for generations. A seed loan had been made to a grandfather or even to a remote ancestor, and had grown with heavy interest to an amount which could never be paid. Possibly

there were debts included here which had begun not even with a seed loan, but with a false charge of theft, like that which had brought the old man of sixty-two to beggary, or debts incurred for clothes which the master expected, or in *ula* labor which the master demanded, or in any of ways in which a master who was responsible to no one might impose debt on serfs who had no way of redress.

All "feudal debts" had been outlawed by the resolution passed July 17 by the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region. "Commercial debts" incurred in 1959 were upheld but only with interest not exceeding one percent per month, or twelve percent a year. The people of this manor would now enforce the law. There seemed no doubt in anyone's mind what was meant by "feudal debts".

The pile of papers had grown as high as a man's waist. A light wind began to lift and scatter the lighter papers. The nearer peasants lifted the great whips and dropped them on the pile, to hold the papers in order and to be themselves consumed. Matches were put to the pile but the heavy papers burned slowly, raising thick clouds of smoke. Men lifted the papers and stirred them with old instruments of torture to give the flames air. Presently, amid shouts from the crowd, the pile burst into a sheet of flame. There was no lack of willing hands to turn the fuel and to raise the blaze.

Lhalu looked on for a moment. He had straightened his back and raised his head as soon as the accusation

was over when the people had turned from him to the papers. He gazed without expression at the fire which was burning away the documents of his feudal power. Then a few of the guards came to take him away. He went without handcuffs.

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As the former serfs watched the fire die down and the ashes scatter, our group of foreign correspondents divided into smaller groups to visit the manor-house. The downstairs was bare; it had been used for serfs' quarters and for storage. One room with a stone floor and stone walls and a very small barred window had been the private jail.

Lhalu's apartments had been on the upper floor, as is custom in houses of Tibetan nobles. He had never lived here regularly; he had lived in Lhasa or Chamdo, according to his government post, and kept this manor as temporary retreat. His rooms were neither large nor well-lit, though they were carpeted and furnished with chairs, beds and tables in dark rich wood as well as some rather expensive but tasteless draperies. The largest room, which seemed his sitting-room, had a big store of imported wines and cognacs. There was a pistol on the table and a tiny but powerful camera of a type suitable for espionage. A small, adjoining room for a concubine had been supplied with foreign perfumes and cosmetics in quantity. Not far away was the private chapel, crammed with Buddha images.

There were disorderly evidences of power and sex and religion and foreign contacts, but there was little that indicated comfort. No middle class Westerner would have wanted this mansion without much remodelling. I recalled what one of the "modernized nobles" had said: "You can get more comfort and even luxury from a single power-plant than from a thousand barefoot serfs." Even for serfowners, the Tibetan way of life had been grim.

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When we gathered that evening in the guest-house to check our notes with the two interpreters who had taken notes continuously in the meeting, we were also given a typed account by a local correspondent of the big July 26th Lhasa mass-meeting in which Lhalu was first accused. The incidents were somewhat sharper and the charges stronger than in the meeting we had visited; this was natural because the Lhasa meeting drew from manors in many places and brought witnesses from as far as Chamdo. The Lhasa meeting also contained the charges of the two political murders; and it had a rather large proportion of accusations from people who had been fairly well-off as *tsaibas*, until they were ruined and driven to beggary on the roads. This also was natural, for Lhasa had been the great center for beggars, who came both seeking alms at festivals and also seeking jobs. Much testimony in Lhasa indicated how this beggary began.

Said Baima Wangchia, thrusting his begging bowl forward and trying to put it on Lhalu's bent neck:

"Look at my rags. I was your *tsaiba* and you broke my family and made me a beggar."

Said Pubu-tseda of Yangda Manor: "There were thirty *tsaiba* households in that manor and you so persecuted them that seventeen households ran away. Then, when you made rebellion, you forced the rest of us to stand guard on the Chiswan bridge to die for your gang of lords."

Said Pingtso of L . . . Manor: "Nine of my family you persecuted to death in two years. We had two hundred and twenty sheep and more than ten cattle, and all of these were seized by you in a day. When my old father protested, you had him given eight hundred lashes from which he died. All of my family was destroyed and all of our property taken by your acts and I was driven out as a beggar on the roads."

Said Nima, a girl from Chamdo: "When Lhalu was governor in Chamdo, he had my brother flogged without cause and cast into jail. So my family beggared itself to ransom him, and we gave six yaks loaded with butter and a hundred *pings* of silver. Then you let my brother come home but he came all bloody with the beatings and he died. My family had nothing left; we became wandering beggars."

Said Renchen, a woman of fifty-nine: "You eater of human flesh and drinker of blood! You persecuted to death eight of my family in Chamdo. You seized them with all our possessions in the broad light of day. I became a beggar on the road all the way to Lhasa and even in Lhasa I dared not show my face after you

came here. I prayed to die but now I am glad to be living. For under the bright sun of the people we shall punish this man-eating wolf by law!"

The number of these accusations seemed to indicate a fairly common process through which *tsaiba* households which began to enrich themselves were beggared. Lhasa had been full of such people, and even in Lhasa they were expected to send a poll-tax to their distant lord. This was the obvious meaning of the woman Renchen's complaint that she dared not show her face in Lhasa.

The most important charges were of course those concerned with the political assassinations of Living Buddha Geda and Regent Rabchen, both eminent patriotic Tibetan leaders, who were murdered by the pro-British elements in the period before the liberation. The Rabchen Hutuktu,[1] Regent for the present Dalai Lama in the first eight years, was arrested and strangled in prison in 1947. The Living Buddha Geda died suddenly in Chamdo in 1950 with symptoms that indicated poison, but that could not be checked because the body was so quickly burned by the authorities. Chinese have held that Lhalu, then governor of Chamdo and "the British agent Robert Ford" were guilty of this. Ford, captured when the PLA took Chamdo, held for some years and finally released, wrote a book in England claiming his own innocence but stating that he thought he knew who did it but would not tell. . . .

[1]Hutuktu, a specially high Living Buddha.

This of itself points to Lhalu for whom Ford displays great admiration. Ford's account of his own reasons for running a radio transmission in Chamdo during a civil war may convince British readers of his good sportsmanship but will not appeal to Asians with experience of British agents.

Tsaba Banden, brother of the Living Buddha Geda, came all the way from Chamdo to Lhasa to testify against Lhalu, crying out: "I saw Geda killed." The reporter noted that "Lhalu's face grew dark as earth" when he saw Geda's brother. But while the witness called Lhalu "that poisonous devil" and that "lackey of the imperialists", I found no factual data in his report beyond his presence at the death bed where he "saw Geda die of poison". This was convincing enough to his Lhasa audience who are well aware of the wide experience their top lamas have with poisons, but will hardly be "evidence" in the West.

Evidence on the murder of the Regent was much stronger. Here we had not only a lama from Sera Monastery who "on behalf of all the lamas of Sera" accused Lhalu of "killing the Living Buddha Rabchen who loved the people". We have also flat testimony from one of Rabchen's body-servants who says he saw the deed in the jail, where the Regent was attended by several body-servants. This man Duntsuchienchun bared his own arms and legs to show great scars and pulled open his tunic to show old wounds on his body as he declared:

"Look at the scars! They were made by this wolf here after he strangled Living Buddha Rabchen the Regent with his own hands." Then, turning on Lhalu he said: "In 1947 on March 17th by the Tibetan calendar I saw you strangle him in the jail with your own hands. Then we, his servants, were seized and flogged into this shape. Now that we have a people's government I demand punishment on you for your victims." More details of the killing were said to have been given in the meeting but were not published in the press. They are no doubt in the data filed against Lhalu in the Lhasa court. Nobody I met in Lhasa doubted that Lhalu had done this deed.

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"What will they do with Lhalu?" I asked one of the chairmen in the accusation meeting we attended. He looked at me in some surprise.

"That will depend on Lhalu," he replied. "If he repents and convinces the government that he has turned from the past, he will be set free and given a job suited to his abilities. Certainly this cannot happen at once. He has killed many people, some directly and others indirectly. But this does not necessarily bring a death sentence. He will at least be confined for a time and re-educated by labor. Many of the rebels are now working on the construction of the new power plant for Lhasa. They work like other people but there are guards not far away.

"From the accusations already made it seems the court may find that his crimes demand a death sentence.

Even this does not mean that he is executed. A death sentence with us often has a two years' provision attached. If in two years he shows that he can become a new man, then even a death sentence is removed. No death sentence can be carried out until it is passed by three courts, the lower court, the court of the province, in this case, of Tibet, and finally by the Supreme Court of Peking. Hence nothing either good or bad will happen suddenly to Lhalu. His future will develop one way or the other according to his own acts."

"Are you going to take him around to all his twenty-two manors for accusation meetings?" I asked.

"Probably not," smiled the chairman. "This depends on the demands of the peasants and on how the authorities handling Lhalu decide. Probably all of his manors want to accuse him. But most of his peasants near Lhasa came to the big mass-meeting. Guards have to be spared and trips to distant manors are not easy to arrange. They may decide that these two meetings are enough. The period of the *san fan* and *shuang jian* draws to its close."

He explained that the "democratic reform" was being carried out in two stages. The present stage was that of the *san fan* and *shuang jian,* the "three abolitions and two reductions" in which the rebellion, the forced *ula* labor and the personal servitude, were to be abolished, while land rent and interest were to be reduced. This policy, decreed July 17th by Tibet's local

government, must be carried out by actions among the people.

"The people should learn through these meetings that they no longer owe obedience to nobles, but that the people themselves are the source of law which everyone must obey. This leads to the organization of Peasants' Associations and these become township and county government. Already the old local governments by nobles and monasteries are abolished by the military control; now the military control must give way to government by the Tibetan people. When this is done, we proceed to the second stage, the distribution of land to the peasants. The Preparatory Committee is already negotiating the purchase of land from the nobles; the new local governments will handle its distribution. These accusation meetings are only a temporary stage."

IX. I CLIMB THE POTALA PALACE

In the first week in Lhasa I was not sure that I would even try to climb the Potala Palace though it was clearly the most spectacular trip. I was discouraged by reading books. These said it was thirteen stories high and it looked it, though you can't count from below because the structure is imbedded in the cliff. What especially perturbed was a British writer's description of "a climb of 440 feet up stone ramps and perpendicular ladders slippery with centuries of butter fumes and drippings from butter lamps, — greasy ladders whose springy hand-rails come only part way down."

Since I climbed even the single flight of stairs in the guest-house with much puffing in the thin Lhasa air, the thought of thirteen perpendicular ladders appalled. Stone ramps I might mount by taking time, perpendicular ladders, no!

When our party scheduled the trip for an afternoon after another hard morning's tour, with an evening theatrical performance to follow, the program seemed too much. I asked Feng-feng to climb the Potala for me and take notes; if she then thought I could make it, I would go by myself later, when the party went to Shigatze, a trip I had decided not to make. Feng-

feng returned with a note-book of data and added: "I don't think you'll find the Potala any worse than other trips you've made."

"Are those perpendicular ladders in sequence on outside walls where you could fall a long way, or are they just from one floor to the next?"

"I didn't see any perpendicular ladders at all," replied Feng-feng. So I asked how far she had gone and she said to the roof.

"To the Dalai Lama's apartments?"

"Of course! That was the main trip."

Since Feng-feng is notoriously honest, it seemed that the British writer had been making his tale picturesque. I later found that other writers have become "dizzy with success" on climbing the Potala, and have elaborated details that just aren't there, perhaps believing nobody would ever come to check. A Frenchman who made the trip a decade ago discovered that "the five colossal tombs of the greatest Dalai Lamas spring from the floor of the Red Palace and shoot up through various storeys and emerge through the roof as five glittering pagodas covered with sheets of gold". While there are several tombs of past Dalai Lamas in the Red Palace, only two of them — the Fifth and Thirteenth Bodies — are "colossal", shooting up through three storeys; none of them pierce the roof. I verified this by observation and by photograph; it was also confirmed by my guide.

"They'll probably take you up the rear side, the way the Dalai Lama goes," said Feng-feng. "They say that

side is easier." Of course, I thought, the Dalai Lama lived there every winter. He wouldn't have perpendicular ladders to his home.

"Can you see it all if you go by the rear way?" I asked.

"You can't see all of the Potala, no matter which way you go", replied Feng-feng. "But you will see all that counts. You'll start high up and miss the lower floors, but these are mostly store-rooms and rooms for servants and retainers. You'll start with the Dalai Lama's throne room, the place where Younghusband forced the treaty in 1904. From there you'll climb three or four storeys to the roof and see the Dalai Lama's apartments and the view, and then go over to the Dalai Lamas' tombs. The only thing worth seeing lower down is the bed-rock chapel with the statues of King Srontsan Gambo and his two wives. You can climb down to it if you like, but it's six or seven stories down and back".

We decided to omit Srontsan Gambo and we set the date a week ahead.

Meantime we saw the Potala Palace every day from the valley below it. Wherever we went in Lhasa city or to villages and farms north, south, east, west of Lhasa, the Potala loomed high. Every side was different and every view of it impressive. Sir Charles Bell, British representative in Lhasa earlier in the century, called it "unquestionably one of the most impressive buildings in the world". He says it is nine hundred feet long, and covers the top and most of the sides

of the Red Hill. He speaks of the "baffling magic" of its architecture, words unusually poetic for a British diplomat.

Yet with the deep blue sky above it, and the barley fields below, and the circle of mountains around it, the word "magic" is not inappropriate for the effect produced by the Potala. In part this is due to an architectural style common in Tibet, though not elsewhere; the Potala is said to have taken the Panchen Erdeni's palace in Shigatze as its model. The walls slope inward from the base, as if they followed the lines of the mountain. The door and window frames also slope inward, and are wider at the bottom than at the top. The building thus seems to grow out of the hill in which it is in part embedded. The circle of mountains behind it becomes a natural setting, and the Potala seems a jewel set in a great ring. Of the upper palace, the central part is a deep crimson color, known as the Red Palace; this is bordered on both sides by white structures. Above them all, across the top of the palace, runs a wide band of maroon color, bordered by white and bearing four monograms in gold. This is topped by a gilded roof set with several glittering golden-plated pagodas.

It is throughout irregular and not only because the walls are sloping. The white margins on both sides of the Red Palace are not of equal width. No single storey seems continuous on a level across the entire structure. Even the estimate of thirteen storeys is approximate. For after climbing from the throne room

to the roof and coming down again, I could not say whether I had climbed three storeys or four, because there were many half-flights and flights of differing lengths. In crossing from the Dalai Lama's apartments to the Red Palace with its tombs, we went up and down occasional short flights of stairs. All this irregularity of the palace fits it more closely into the landscape; it is like the irregularity of mountains.

The Potala Palace is not old, as buildings go in Tibet. While a fortified castle was built on this site as long ago as the seventh century by King Srontsan Gambo, this was later destroyed in war, so that practically none of it remains. Much of the present structure was built three centuries ago in the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The work took forty years, and when the Fifth Dalai Lama died during that period, the regent concealed his death for many years, since only the people's loyalty to the "god-king" could have extorted the tremendous amount of unpaid labor needed. The work was all done by manual labor and by serfs. The Red Palace was built at that time, and two round fortress towers to the west and east of it, symbolizing the sun and moon. The Sixth Dalai Lama enlarged and enriched the Palace, adding especially a building low down on the northeast side, known as the Dragon King Palace. The White Palace and the Dalai Lama's private temple at its base were built after 1910 by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.

The usual approach is from the south, the way by which pilgrims have come for three centuries. Here

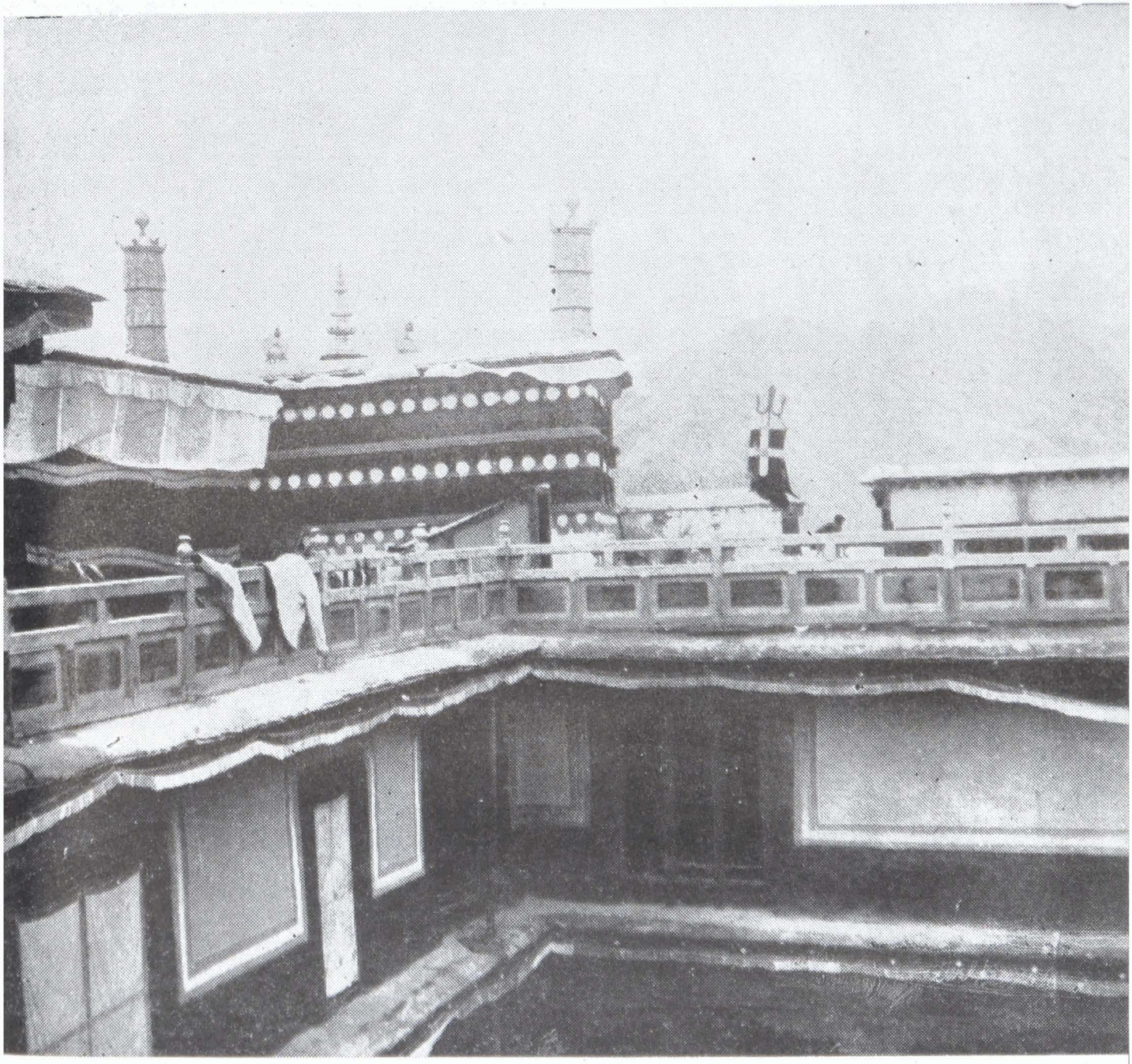
the huge southern wall, massive and white, sloping inward, is pierced by a long stone ramp of steps that, after a long swing to the west, turns and enters the lower part of the palace. It was on these steps that beggars and sick people lay, when the Dalai Lama was in residence, soliciting alms from visitors. These steps also bore the great throng of lamas carrying lights, in the great Prayer Festival at New Years.

At the foot of the ramp, and along the base of the southern wall, a small ragged village contains people who did common labor for the maintenance of the Palace, sweeping its interminable irregular levels of earth and stone, carrying water-jars up its steep steps to the apartments above, where there is neither plumbing nor electric light. In the village is a prison, once visited by Sir Charles Bell. He found a prisoner confined for life in a small, dark, airless cell and asked: "Does not the severity often kill a man soon"? To which the jailer answered: "Yes, it does." . . . More recently, after the March rebellion of 1959, a dungeon was found under the Potala containing poisonous scorpions, into which prisoners had been thrown for quicker killing. This was revealed to the world only after the Dalai Lama fled to India; it became part of the exhibition opened in Lhasa on the horrors of past serfdom.

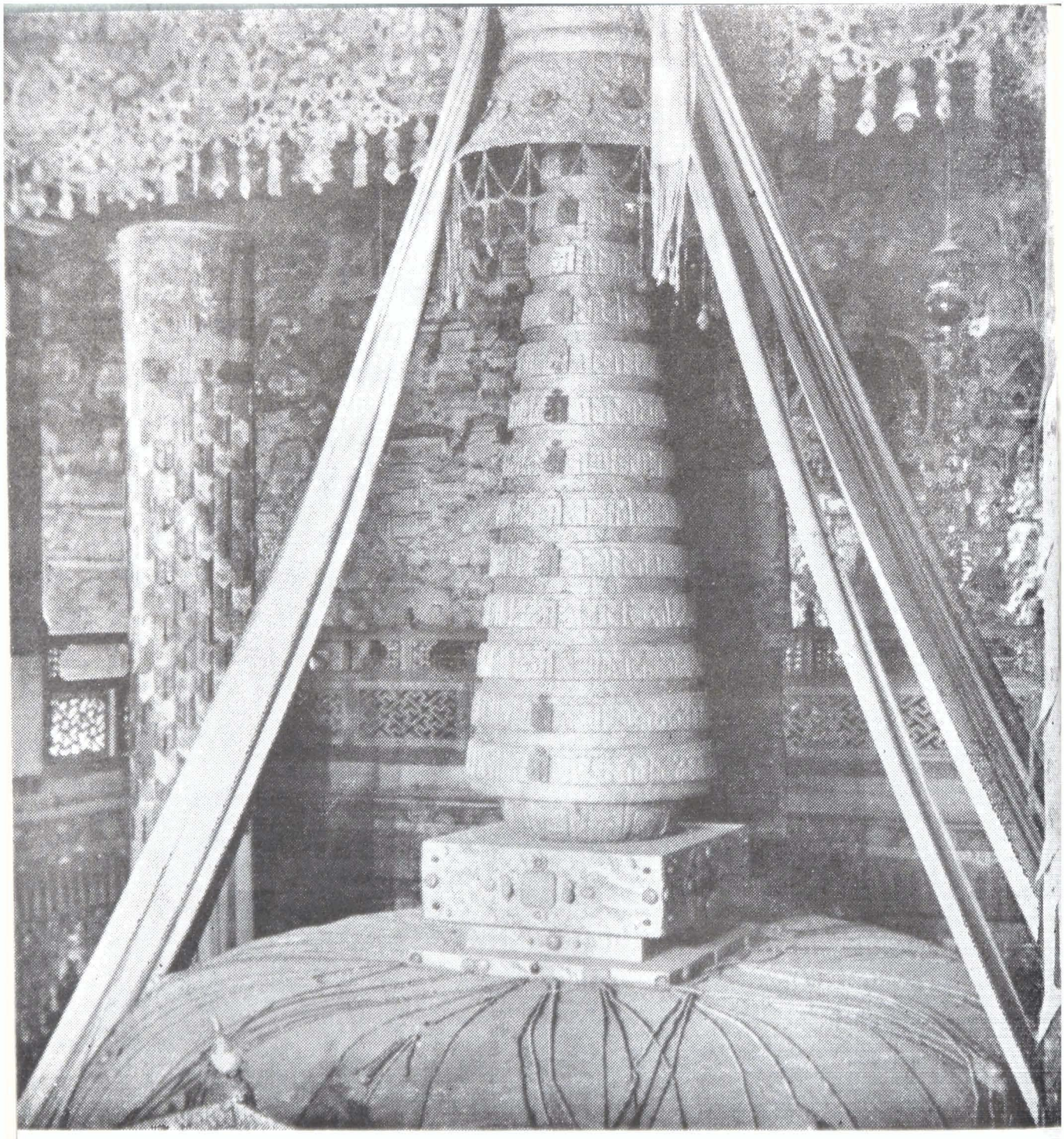
The southern approach was described to me by Feng-feng. "We climbed about two hundred stone steps and came to a gate on which were hung two scrolls of the law. We turned through the gate and climbed

another fifty steps to another gate, also with two scrolls of the law. Through this we came to the big 'devil dance square', where the mass ceremonies and stage performances are held on festival days. Then we started our visit to the Dalai's private temple and the White Palace. We came to a big room with dirty mattresses and hangings piled in a mess. This was the East Chapel, and the place where the Younghusband Treaty was signed by force in 1904. It was also the place where the rebels made their headquarters during the rebellion. They insulted the holy places at random. Everywhere they had made their toilet; the place was full of filth and smells. Also there were empty boxes that had held shells and cartridges; they were marked in English. There were empty bowls, such as are used for holy water under images; these were thrown everywhere. There were lamas' robes and hats and army boots made in Kalimpong." Feng-feng added: "From here we climbed through the Palace to the roof and the Dalai Lama's apartments. This is the room where I think you will begin".

My way to the Potala and the East Chapel was not through the shabby village and the stone ramp of two hundred and fifty steps. I was to go by the north side, by "the Dalai Lama's way". We took an auto road below the southern wall, where a group of women were reaping a ragged patch of barley — our guide called attention to one of them, a nobleman's daughter who was demonstrating fellowship with the serfs — turned sharply to the right around the rocky west wall, and



Part of Potala Roof with Dalai Lama's apartment



Gold-encrusted top-storey of Thirteenth Body's three-storey tomb. (Body is in Buddha-position in round globe)

then again to the right on a steep road up the northern side of the hill. Even in low gear it was difficult climbing. Finally we stopped; our auto could climb no further.

On our right as we dismounted the high wall of the Potala soared into the sky. On our left was an outer wall protecting a steep road. Beyond this wall, far down, we saw the Dragon King Palace, embowered in trees, built by the Sixth Dalai Lama for a retreat. A short way up the steep road a wide breach had been made in the outer wall, through which the compound of Lhasa City Hospital appeared in direct sight; empty shell-cases and bits of clothing lay around.

"This was the place from which the rebels shelled the hospital", said our guide. We hardly needed the information; the hospital was the clear target below.

From this point the Dalai Lama had been carried in a palanquin. These are out of fashion in today's China; they are tainted with exploitation. But a conveyance exists whose use implies not exploitation by a higher class, but infirmity of health. As our auto stopped, a jeep came up behind us, and from it jumped men carrying a hospital stretcher, which they offered for my use. I looked at it and didn't like it. I looked up the steep rocky road and liked this less. I suggested that by taking time on the road we could dispense with the stretcher.

"Then you'll be tired before you really start", said Feng-feng. "The others were tired when they reached the tombs; they never went as far as the tomb of the

Thirteenth Body. I think it was a pity". This was such good sense that I meekly lay down on the stretcher.

The men went up the hill with me as if they were carrying baggage. Feng-feng was quickly left far behind. I could get no glimpse of what we were passing; I could see only the sky and the high wall. Suddenly the stretcher up-ended so that I thought I would slide off; I clutched the poles beneath me and the bearers also held me against the poles. We were clearly going up steep stairs. As we levelled off we plunged into darkness where I could not see my hand in front of my face. When I raised it a few inches, it struck a roof. When I pushed elbows outward they struck walls on both sides. We were clearly in a narrow, dark tunnel. I called out to let me down, but the bearers paid no heed and Feng-feng was too far behind to reach. So I made myself as small as possible and trusted that the "baggage" would not be brushed off by the roof.

The blackness changed to a dim light; space was visible. The stretcher was lowered for me to dismount. I stood in a very large room with cement floor. On one side was a long sloping roof with cracks of light; on the other a canopied platform bearing a formal divan now partly hidden under a pile of draperies. The walls were bare and discolored except for a few irregular strips of old silk. Heaps of many-colored silken draperies lay on the platform and even on the floor. Half a dozen men, some of them holding butter-lamps, were picking draperies up from corners and putting

them into orderly piles. We had come by the back way into the East Chapel. It had been the rebel headquarters. The sweepers and cleaners of the palace were beginning to bring it into order.

Feng-feng arrived — she had been left far behind — and brought with her Comrade Tudentsairo, our guide to the palace. He was well acquainted here, having been a lama of the Potala Palace for many years. In 1949 he had left to become a layman, and in 1952 he had entered a school maintained by the Military Area to train civil servants. Now he was head of the West District of Lhasa on whose territory the Potala stood.

He told us that the monastery to which he had once belonged was only one of the many activities in the palace. Its monks lived in the west end of the structure; they had duties in personal attendance on the Dalai Lama and in services at the many tombs. There had been one hundred and seventy monks here before the rebellion; one hundred and twenty were left, most of them temporarily staying in Jokhan Monastery for political instruction. Some of the remaining fifty or sixty had probably gone with the Dalai Lama to India, others were known to have gone home after the rebellion, one had been killed in battle.

The room in which we stood was, he said, the throne room in which past Dalai Lamas had been crowned. It was the room which Col. Younghusband had used when he forced the signing of a treaty in 1904 by the regent, when the Thirteenth Dalai had fled to interior China from the British troops. Normally, it was a

room of some splendor, whose walls were covered with colorful silken drapes and whose floors held the long mattress-type of seats covered with rugs on which lamas squatted to read scriptures and prayers.

"In the past no armed men were allowed in this room", he said. "During the rebellion, the armed rebels came in on the morning of February 11th, Tibetan calendar (March 20th by Western calendar), found the lamas sitting on mattress pads and reading the scriptures in the center of the room and pushed them aside. They pulled down the drapes to clear the room for their use, and tossed their drums and weapons in the corners on top of the drapes. They camped here and all over the lower chapels and made their toilet in the chapels and the corridors. The sweepers are now cleaning things up".

The men to whom Tudentsairo thus called attention did not seem excessively busy. They seemed more interested in staring at us than in cleaning the room. It was a long time since the rebels had made the mess and there were still bits of their hardware in corners. Feng-feng told me, however, that ten days earlier on her first trip, the dark corridors had been hard to walk in because there had been so much human excrement scattered about and the small chapels had smelt vilely of the filth; this had now been cleaned up. I had never seen men filthier than the sweepers, but they had an attractive good humor. One of them went to an adjoining room and brought back a small arm chair in green and gold brocade which he offered me as a seat.

I did not know whether this was on orders of Tudentsairo or whether it was the sweeper's own idea. But thereafter the sweeper followed me through the palace, even up to the roof, carrying this green-and-gold brocaded chair, and planting it down for me whenever I stopped.

I asked our guide: "Since you lived so long in the Palace, possibly you know whether the two treasuries mentioned by a British writer of the past are still in the Potala, the private treasury of the Dalai Lama and the emergency treasury for national needs.[1] They were mentioned in a book written twenty years ago".

"There are three treasuries", replied Tudentsairo. "The Dalai's personal treasury, that opens from his

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[1]It was after this visit that the facts came out that in 1951 the Dalai Lama shipped gold treasure out of Lhasa into Sikkim to the amount of about one thousand mule-loads and a value variously estimated in India from $4,000,000 to $100,000,000, the latter being the guess of the rather sensational *"Blitz"*. Its presence in Sikkim was revealed in early 1960 when the Dalai Lama, wanting funds, transferred the treasure by plane to Calcutta. The reason for the wide variance in estimate is that the Indian Government, according to Mrs. Menon, vice-secretary of Foreign Affairs, permitted it to enter the country as an "unexamined shipment", without customs duties.

The exposed fact that the Dalai Lama kept this hoard abroad for eight years secretly while asserting constant loyalty and praise of Peking, and while writing a "Hymn to Mao Tse-tung" which compared him to Brahma, Creator of the World, will not raise his reputation with the people of today's Tibet. Nor will the fact that India permitted the violation of her own laws on foreign currency as well as the laws of China, in an amount of millions of dollars in order to finance a rebellion against China, endear India to anyone in China or in that part of China called Tibet.

private chapel on the roof, the emergency treasury, which could only be opened in the presence of all the cabinet ministers, and the treasury of the Potala Monastery for the needs of the lamas. They were all locked but not sealed when the People's Liberation Army took the Potala from the rebels. They were opened once for inspection by the Military Control in presence of the lamas' representatives, to see if they contained arms. No inventory was taken for the inspection was brief, but it was seen that there was considerable gold, silver, baskets of silver dollars and piles of silk brocades. Then they were locked and sealed shut".

"Would you ask the sweepers what they think should be done with the treasuries"? I said.

The sweepers looked stunned; clearly they had never thought of things so far beyond their control. Then they rallied and began a rapid discussion. One old sweeper gestured with both hands in argument, putting his butter-lamp on the floor. He was reported by Tudentsairo to Feng-feng in Chinese and by Feng-feng in English to me.

"He says the treasuries should be given to the present government because it is feeding the lamas of the Potala better than their own treasury did. The others agree and the young man has added: 'In the past we sweepers were hungry and not paid, and now we get paid' ".

"If the Dalai Lama comes back," I continued, "should he get his private treasury again?"

This seemed to stun them more than the first question. To ask about the Dalai Lama and his treasury must have seemed little short of sacrilege to men who had spent their lives sweeping his earthen ledges and cement floors. But again they quickly revived to the joy of discussion. They came up with a reply.

"If the Dalai Lama comes back, then to give to him and to the government, isn't it the same"?

"Tell them the state oracle couldn't answer better", I laughed.

Before leaving the room I tried to arrange a stand for my camera, hoping to get a picture in the dim light. Tudentsairo offered to give more light. He spoke to a sweeper, and several men left the room and pulled apart the rafters of the sloping roof to let in light. With surprise I saw that this chapel, lasting through centuries, was roofed in part by rough boards, not even nailed in place.

The contrast between the bed-rock appearance of the Potala and the flimsy construction of many details, continued as we left the East Chapel and went up to the roof. It was a zigzag route, a maze of corridors and irregular stairs. Some stairs were of solid rock that seemed part of the cliff or wall; these would be followed by the type of steep stair we call a "ship's ladder", with wooden treads reinforced by strips of iron at the place where the ball of the foot struck. This made them slippery, so one went slowly and took care. But the hand-holds were good; there were no difficult ladders and no grease from butter.

At one point in a corridor Tudentsairo showed me a rough door, pasted over with strips of paper on which were seals. "This is the emergency treasury", he said. It did not seem a very solid vault. Any capable burglar might have opened it. To get away with the loot from Tibet might have been harder. Safety lay in the many lamas and sweepers who could raise alarm.

The zigzags and the uneven flights of stairs were so many that I could not tell whether we had climbed three, four or even five storeys when we finally came out, without exhaustion, on the roof from which the Dalai Lama's apartments opened. We looked far down on a wide valley, on the city of Lhasa and the river, with the Turquoise Bridge in the foreground and the golden roofs and spires of Jokhan Monastery beyond. This was the Dalai Lama's promenade in his winter residence. His apartments are woven into the roof, opening from it in irregular places.

We went first into what seemed a small reception room. Along the lacquered walls were ranged eighteen statues of disciples of the Buddha, with bowls for water in front of each, all now turned upside down. "When the Dalai Lama is in residence, the bowls are kept full of water, but when he moves to Jewel Park, then the bowls here are emptied. It is the same with the butter-lamps. They are lit when he is here; at other times only the lamps in the chapels near the tombs are lit, where the lamas from the monastery come to pray". So Tudentsairo explained, as he offered us tea, with candies and biscuits. I accepted the

tea, — it was the pale, unsweetened tea of China, not the buttered tea that Tibetans would prefer. It was made of freshly boiled water, carried up for us from below. All the water for hundreds of bowls in front of Buddha statues in all the rooms, had to be carried up those thirteen floors. There was no running water in the Palace, no plumbing nor electric light. I refused the biscuits, which came from a box that seemed to have been there a long time.

Returning to the roof and crossing an open space decorated by strange gilded animals, we entered the Dalai Lama's private chapel. It was a large room, suited to service for perhaps a hundred people, but so full of gilded and lacquered pillars, and of silken *chutze* — long cylinders of silk hanging from the ceiling, each made of hundreds of smaller silken scarves that it would not have been easy for many people to see a speaker on the canopied platform. The room was rich with thick brilliant carpet, with hangings, with carved and painted walls. Several porcelain statues stood on the floor. Everything was as fresh and orderly as if the Dalai Lama were there.

"Did the rebels get up here?" I asked.

Tudentsairo replied that as soon as the sweepers of the Palace saw what kind of hooligans the rebels were, they came upstairs and dropped the trapdoors which were at the top of every steep ship's ladder so that the rebels could not come up. If the rebels had remained longer or had had any compelling reason for coming

upstairs they might have cut their way, but they did not do this.

Just inside the private chapel to the left Tudentsairo lifted a dark padded hanging and showed me a sealed door. "That is the door to the Dalai Lama's private treasury", he said: "It is one storey down but the only entrance is here".

Crossing the roof again, we entered other rooms of the private apartments, most of them small, and connected by narrow corridors, with many high thresholds over which one might easily trip. All were heavy with carving and lacquer, padded with rugs and hangings, lined with Buddhas in glass cases or painted on walls. One was clearly the bedroom, for it had an elaborately carved low bedstead in dark wood, with the carvings rising on all sides of the mattress, which was covered with a rug and a piece of lion skin. The room was hardly bigger than a monk's cell and its one, small window was in a recess, so that the view was not insistently visible. Even so high above the ground, the window gave little light to the room. One wall was solidly filled by a glass case, containing three large "longevity Buddhas".

The room beyond, equally small, seemed meant for morning devotions. It differed from the bedroom chiefly in that the elaborately carved wooden frame with the rug-covered mattress was smaller, too short for sleeping, with a lectern in front of it to hold Scriptures so that the Dalai Lama might squat on the mattress to read. Several rooms had these low, carved

mattress-seats with lecterns for reading; some were larger, as if for receiving a tutor or reader. All of them were painted, lacquered and carved from floor to ceiling with Buddhas, disciples, demons and gods. Incense flooded the air from floor receptacles; these had been lit while we were viewing the chapel. The scent, at first pleasant, became at last a bit heavy. Our guide said the incense was kept on when the Dalai Lama was there.

Only one of all the carved and painted rooms seemed a fairly pleasant place for living. This was a rather large corner room to the southeast, where a wall and a half of glass doors made a break in the endless Buddhas, and opened on a narrow cat-walk type of porch with a sweeping view. Light came into this room, and Lhasa, the river and the hills. Here for a moment the eye escaped from the carved, lacquered religious routine. The construction of the glass doors was a bit flimsy; it would hardly be tight against the storms of winter. Other places also in the elaborately ornate apartments showed occasional primitive construction, not weather-tight, contrasting curiously with the luxurious finish.

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A short distance across the roof from the apartment of the living Dalai Lama, and down a half-flight of stairs, we reached the upper level of the Red Palace, where the tombs of the previous "Bodies" stand. The Dalai Lama is by theory one continuous being, many

times incarnated. In speaking of his historic acts, one may loosely speak of the Fifth or the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, but in the tombs one refers strictly to the Fifth or the Thirteenth Body.

In size most of the tombs are modest, this being determined by the length of time the incarnation lasted and the amount of gold and silver accumulated to build the tomb. These tombs are in dim rooms without windows, lit only through the hall and the entering door; they are further concealed behind carved screens of metal through which, peering, one gets a vague glint of the rounded top of the receptacle holding the body. By contrast with these dark places, a small chapel among the tombs, filled again with carved and painted Buddhaṣ, in which lamas were officiating with small butter-lamps, seemed almost brilliant with light. The tomb of the Fifth Body is one of the two large ones — it runs three storeys high, some sixty feet — but it also is dimly seen.

The tomb of the Thirteenth Body is the exception. It has its own three storey pavilion with windows on two sides, so that it can be clearly seen. It also runs up through three storeys, stated as seventy feet high, slightly higher than the Fifth. The large space that we entered was like a room thirty-five or forty feet square of which all the walls were painted with scenes from the life of the Thirteenth Body, while the central part of the room was cut away so that the tomb rose through it, leaving the outer part of the floor as a balcony, on which we could walk all around the tomb,

and view it on three levels and from four sides. The light from windows in the outer walls was hardly brilliant but it was adequate for a time exposure. I took a photograph of the upper storey of the tomb which is, I think, unique. I was also given information about the manner of burial and the location of the body, which I think is unknown to the West.

The three-storey tomb begins on the lower floor as a golden rectangular form, like a normal burial vault or enclosed room. On top of this rises at the second floor level a huge golden sphere. The third storey consists of a tall cone, which shoots from the sphere almost to the roof. Here it is topped by what at first glance seems a crown, but which closer scrutiny shows to be a bell, upended over the tip of the cone. This is known as a "chakub", and is a sign of protection; on the bell's upper edge rise a sun and a moon.

The entire tomb, from lower rectangular vault to upper bell-crowned cone, is covered with thick plates of gold, encrusted with many jewels. Some people have estimated that a ton of gold went into the tomb. I don't see how anybody knows.

I took it for granted, and I think the handful of Westerners who have seen the tomb have taken it for granted, that the body lay in the larger lower vault in a recumbent position. To my surprise, Tudentsairo said that this is not the case. The lower storey, he said, is an enclosed room containing property of the Thirteenth Body, and especially presents given to him,

grain, tea, and golden gifts of many kinds. The body is in the central golden sphere, not recumbent, but seated in the Buddha position, with knees bent and legs crossed in front. It has been made into a golden Buddha statue".

"How do you know all this?" I asked.

"I was present at the burial", he replied. "I was a lama of the Potala and I saw the body prepared for burial. It was first rubbed several times with salt, to absorb fluids and preserve it, then it was painted all over with clay, to close pores and make a base, and then this base was lacquered with gold leaf. Then the golden statue was seated in his robe in the Buddha posture, and around him were placed the things he used in intimate daily life, his favorite scriptures, his writing materials and other intimate objects. Then this was all enclosed in the golden sphere as if in a small round room".

We returned across the roof to the apartment of the Fourteenth Body, living still but absent in India. As we left this apartment by the main door back to the White Palace, we saw that a sentry of the People's Liberation Army stood on guard outside the apartment, to which, however, he did not apparently hold the key. Two pallets on the floor indicated that the entrance was thus guarded night and day, by soldiers who do not enter.

"Very few people have entered since the Dalai Lama left", said Tudentsairo. "It has been open only to a

few or two close retainers of the Dalai Lama who have business in connection with its contents, your party of foreign correspondents, and those who are responsible for keeping the place safe against the return of the Dalai Lama or whatever other disposition the future may bring."

We went back down the dim corridors and steep ships-ladders, through the throne room that the rebels dismantled, and out the dark tunnel through which we had come. I refused this time the proffered stretcher, for the road lay downward, though it was long and steep and rocky to the car. I stopped at the breach in the wall that the rebels made to shell the city hospital. The many buildings of the hospital lay in the sun below me, and I knew that the shell-marks were repaired.

I understood why the Dalai Lama did not like his Potala Palace but preferred the new palace he had built in Jewel Park. And why the Panchen Erdeni, for his Lhasa residence, also passed the ancient Potala by. I thought of the "way of life" that had endured here for centuries, in which the highest of the land — the symbol and incarnation of godhead, endowed also with temporal power — spent his winter nights at higher than 12,000 feet elevation, in small lacquered rooms painted all over with Buddhas, with only the dim light of butter-lamps, and only the warmth of charcoal braziers, and only the water that was carried up two hundred and fifty stone steps and thirteen more storeys on the backs of serfs.

In March of 1959 that "way of life" had ended. I wondered if the Potala Palace, that looked from afar like a jewel, would ever be opened again except as a museum. It was already the highest and would be one of the most impressive, of all the museums of the world.

X. REFORM IN A MAJOR MONASTERY

A few miles west of Lhasa on the highway to Shigatse stood Drepung,[1] the biggest monastery, biggest serfowner and biggest rebel in Tibet. The rebellion having been quelled, Drepung was "under reform". We allotted an entire day to it, knowing that this gave time to see only a small part.

Drepung was a feudal state within a feudal state. The "Big Three Monasteries" — Drepung, Sera and Ganden — were for centuries the backbone of the reactionary political machine that dominated the life of Tibet. Drepung, the largest, had special privileges in appointing many of the top clerical officials in Tibet's government. Every year for the three weeks of the great Prayer Festival at New Year, Drepung's "Iron Bar Lamas" took over the entire administration of Lhasa municipality, imposing taxes and fines at will and enriching themselves and the monastery by this. Past Chinese emperors, fearing Drepung's political power, had by edict limited it to 7,700 monks, but at times these had grown to nine or ten thousand. The

[1] Also spelled De-pung, Daipung, meaning "Rice Heap".

number had sharply fallen in recent years. Besides the central monastery, Drepung had over seven hundred subsidiary monasteries scattered all over Tibet and in the Tibetan areas of adjacent provinces.

As serf-owner, Drepung had owned 185 manorial estates with some 25,000 serf population, and 300 pastures with 16,000 herdsmen. As recent rebel, Drepung had sent 3,050 armed monks to fight the central government of China, beginning with a band of fifty who went to Chamdo in 1950 to organize against the People's Liberation Army all along its way to Lhasa and ending with over two thousand monks who had fought in the March rebellion in Lhasa in which Drepung was a major force. It was hardly surprising that Drepung had come under military control in a reform that sought to change Drepung from a dictator of law to a "law-abiding" monastery limited to religious activities.

A chill wind was tearing the sky into a patchwork of rolling clouds and bright blue openings as we skirted the northern wall of the Potala Palace and took the highway west. We soon passed the Central Transport Services on our right, where the tops of auto-busses showed above a six foot earthen wall which the rebels had tried to storm in March and where they had been repelled by the transport workers. Soon our autos tangled with traffic coming into the city: donkey carts, laden burros, auto-trucks and even a few bicycles, these last very new in Tibet. A group of five women waved at us from the road, the brightly colored sleeves of

their under-blouses blowing gaily in the sun. We passed green swamp flats and steeply rising hill-slopes and came, just beyond the squat gilded temple of the State Oracle, to Drepung, the "Rice Heap", so-called because from a distance its cluster of buildings looks like a great heap of rice poured by some giant in a pocket between hills.

A dirt road from the highway turned towards the monastery but it grew rapidly rougher and steeper until it forced our autos and then our jeeps to stop at precisely the place where a long procession of monks in wine-colored robes had come to meet us. A front line of less than a dozen contained the dignitaries, the top three of whom were marked by long yellow sashes, which encircled their necks and flowed down inside their dark red robes. Two of these were *kanpo,* or abbot, heads of one of the many colleges in Drepung, and the third was a *kansu,* a former *kanpo,* who in retirement still kept his rank. Superior to them in learning, though not in rule, and distinguished not by yellow sash but by spectacles, was a *gesi,* a doctor of philosophy in Buddhist theology, its highest existing rank. His name was Miwo, and he was a Han by birth, who had studied in Peking but lived twenty years now in Lhasa where he was presently also vice-chairman of the Lhasa Branch of the All-China Buddhist Association. This fact indicated loyalty to China for the rebels denounced all organizations in which Hans mingled with Tibetans.

These four chiefs were large, dignified and corpulent, holding rank from the past and set apart from the crowd by full-fed bodies, fine-quality robes and wrist-watches. Next to them, and in fact, a little ahead of them and first in the line, stood a small, thin lama in a neat but worn robe, distinguished neither by yellow sash nor spectacles but by his lean hungriness. This was Chunei-rantzen, a lama of the lower ranks who, during the rebellion, had expressed discontent at being ordered to take up arms against the state, and had been flogged for this. He was now elevated to power as chairman of the "Committee for Putting Down Rebellion" in Drepung, a temporary post which might, however, lead to future eminence in whatever new administration might be formed after Drepung was pronounced "law-abiding". It was understood that religious affairs would continue to be run by the *kanpos* and *gesi,* but administration of daily life would be "democratically run" by a committee on which the lower lamas would be represented, they who in centuries never had a voice.

The two *kanpos,* as monastery chiefs, exchanged *hatas*[1] formally with the two chairmen of our correspondents' group, and we saw again why we had elected them. Then we slowly made our way up the hill through a rabbit warren of rough stone buildings by a narrow cobbled road that was both steep and hard on the feet. A tough climb brought us to the

[1] *Hatas,* silk scarves used in ceremonial greetings.

Main Chapel, a huge golden-roofed building which looked out over many other roofs. Here we were to get our general briefing and lunch with the monastery chiefs. Then we would see the exhibition of monasteries, the new chorus of boy lamas, a new drama written and produced by the lamas' drama club, and an accusation meeting in which the monks would accuse two former Iron Bar Lamas and a Living Buddha. Whenever we wished we would break into small groups to interview individuals.

The Main Chapel at the top of the "rice heap" was a large, cheerless structure dating back to 1416. They said it held five thousand lamas at Scripture Chanting, but the size was masked by a dimness common to lamaist buildings and also by a forest of square columns that supported the roof and by many statues and hanging ropes of offerings that obstructed the view. What at first seemed stained glass windows at the far end turned out to be an enormous gaudy Buddha statue, three storeys high and lit from a window-like opening at second storey level. This upper light filtered down through irregular architecture and many smaller Buddhas to the nearest statues, one of Tson Khapa, founder of the Yellow Sect, and two of former Dalai Lamas, and one very small image of a baby protected by a glass dome with seven bowls of water placed reverently before it, since this was the "baby incarnation" of a famous *gesi* at the time when the monastery was built. There were no chairs or benches but between the stone pillars ran long rows of worn, dusty

mattress-pads on the floor on which lamas might squat for Scripture Chanting, though they could not expect to see the speaker through all the confused trappings of the place. We later learned that only upper-class lamas sat on mattress-pads. The lower lamas sat on stone.

We climbed by a wooden and not very elegant staircase to a third floor of this huge building and found the office for the "Putting Down of Rebellion" just under the roof. It was a long rectangle of a room, some thirty by twenty feet in size, with window-like but unglassed openings between the pillars of the far wall, giving on a distant view. These let in less light than one expected for the walls were thick and there was a wide overhang to the roof. The view itself was spectacular. One looked down across gilded roofs and tall gilded, fantastically shaped pillars and pagodas to a wide valley and circling hills beyond. In this valley the Younghusband Expedition of the British Army had camped in 1904, and threatened to blow Drepung off the earth with artillery unless the monastery supplied the troops with grain. So the lamas had gone in long file down that steep stony road, each bearing a sack of barley to the British troops.

Turning back from the view to inspect the room more closely, one saw that a rectangle of tables had been laid out with dishes and tea-cups and around this were benches now softened by gaudy colored rugs. Though prepared for hospitality, it was neither a cheerful nor a restful room. It was a torture of color and

ornament, lavish without harmony. The many pillars were dull red, and covered with cartoons and slogans. The carpet was bright red in background, with complex figures in writhing colors. The ceiling rafters were a vivid, harsh blue and the ceiling between them was pale yellow, so that as one moved through the room, the ceiling became a changing pattern in yellow and harsh blue. The many placards on the wall were in Tibetan which we had no time to translate, but one cartoon may serve to give the tone. It was called: "the two-faced lama", and it showed a lama whose head had two faces and whose body had six arms, a form not unusual in Buddha paintings. These arms were all busily employed, three of them in praying, blessing and collecting contributions, and the other three in beating, torturing and raping. Since the victims of all these activities were also shown, the space was inartistically crammed with contradictory detail from the god to whom prayer was made to the woman who was raped. This restless picture seemed typical of the restless complexity of the room.

We were given lunch intermingled with greetings and speeches by the *kanpos* and by Chunei-rantzen, the thin chairman of the "Committee for Putting Down Rebellion". They were interpreted by a tall man in a blue cotton suit and tan overcoat who seemed startlingly modern in this setting, and who was supplied by the "working team" in charge of reform. His neatly trousered suit and brisk manner were the most military things we saw in Drepung, for though the

monastery was "under military control", the soldiers seemed long since to have left, after discovering and confiscating a large quantity of weapons that were hidden under Buddha statues. The military control was expressed by two "working teams" which no doubt had the military power behind them, but which were civilian in aspect and largely composed of Tibetans, former runaway serfs who had received education in the interior of China.

It was from the speeches that we learned that the Main Chapel dated from 1416; that Drepung had enjoyed for centuries many prerogatives, including the right to appoint many high clerical officials in the government of Tibet, that it had been "a center of the reactionary wing of the monasteries"; that it had maintained its own court, jail and torture system, using these not only against its own lamas, but against any laymen with whom the lamas came into conflict. We learned incidentally that the large number of vultures we saw swooping over the monastery, and that were especially visible from the high window-spaces of this room, were attracted by the "heavenly burials", the name given to the exposing of corpses to vultures, one of the accepted forms of burial in Tibet.

We were also enlightened as to Drepung's form of organization. The monastery was composed of several Tsatsangs, or colleges, and each of these had many Kangchungs, or residential areas. The ruling organ was the Lhachi Conference,[1] which had three grades:

[1]Or Nachi or Rachi, the liquid letters being mixed in Tibetan.

Reception Committee at Drepung, the fat upper lamas, the thin lower activist lama, the tall man from the working-team

Drepung's main chapel with lamas going to "accusation meeting"

the small conference, the enlarged and the extra-enlarged. The small or inner conference had fifteen members, thirteen of whom were *kanpos,* or heads of a Tsatsang. The first enlargement was made by adding eight members, including two *kisu,* the financial and business managers, the lama in charge of manorial estates and two Iron Bar Lamas, in charge of police. For the largest conference, six more upper lamas were added, including the man in charge of the Scripture Chanting Hall and a lama physician who tended sick lamas.

This organization of the monastery had not been changed by the military control, but a "Committee for Putting Down Rebellion" had been superimposed, consisting largely of lower lamas and of a few of the upper lamas who had not actively taken part in rebellion. This committee was temporary, its function being to hold political discussions about the policies of the Central Government of China and the serfdom of Tibet, with special reference to the activities of Drepung. It was part of the general *san fan* movement for putting down rebellion, forced labor and servitude, and included accusation meetings in which lamas were encouraged to bring out facts of long abuses. After some six months of such education, the lamas themselves were expected to set up the new administration for Drepung, in which it was assumed that religious matters would still be in the hands of the *kanpo* and *gesi,* men learned in Buddhism, while obsolete offices such as those in charge of manorial estates and of usurious loans would

be abolished, and the administration of housing and food and daily life would be "democratically managed" under a committee on which the lower lamas would have representation.

Drepung's part in rebellion was briefly given by Chunei-rantzen. In 1950 Drepung sent fifty armed monks to Chamdo, to fight the People's Liberation Army there and also to arouse revolt against them among villages on the road as they came to Lhasa. In 1952, Drepung helped Lokongwa's attempt to organize for the expulsion of the Hans from Tibet. In 1956 Drepung, with Sera and Ganden, opposed the forming of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region because this was expected to introduce "democratic reform" while the monasteries intended to keep serfdom forever and said they would "shed fresh blood" to maintain their "holy system". More recently when the "Support Religion, Anti-Communist Army" was formed in Loka in 1958, Drepung sent three well armed companies. In early 1959 Drepung helped call the meeting in Jewel Park which detained the Dalai Lama in his quarters lest he contact the Hans.

These rebellious acts were done under the direction of the Lhachi Conference, Drepung's top organization. Before the armed assault against the Central Government Offices, all lamas in Drepung were ordered to recite curses against the Hans. On March 16th the Iron-Bar Lama Doje-paida announced that Tibet's independence had been proclaimed and urged all lamas to

join the armed ranks. "To kill one Han gives more merit than to build a Buddhist dagoba," he said.

Lamas who showed reluctance to fight were punished. "I myself," said Chunei-rantzen, "was given a hundred and twenty lashes for showing dissatisfaction with fighting. Many of the lower lamas did not wish to fight, because we considered it to be against Buddhism. But only after the rebellion was put down, and after we had many discussions in the *san fan* movement did we finally understand that the 'holy system' we were asked to protect by fighting was not religion but serfdom, by which we also were oppressed.

"For now for the first time we have freedom of religion. We are free to be lamas or not to be lamas; we can go home and marry if we choose. We are free to go to services or not to go to services. We can have a chorus and a drama club and earn money by productive work. In the past our lives were at the disposal of the Iron Bar Lamas who could beat us for even a small trouble and even kill us if they wished. Now we are masters of our own lives and not only are we free but we have enough to eat which we never had before."

There had been 5,678 lamas in Drepung before the rebellion; now there were only 2,800. Part of this was due to seasonal variation for lamas always gathered in Drepung in winter for shelter and to get contributions at the great Prayer Festival while in summer they went to the harvest areas to get grain. The main decline came from the sending of more than two

thousand armed monks to fighting in Lhasa at Jewel Park. Few of these had returned. Only a handful were killed but many were captured and many more had run away to their homes after the defeat. Some had gone to stay in monasteries in the Panchen Erdeni's territory, to be out of the political pressures caused by the rebellion. We later learned that the monasteries in the Panchen Erdeni's territory had somewhat grown in numbers through monks who fled from the turmoil caused by the conflict in the Dalai Lama's part of Tibet.

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The exhibition, which we visited after lunch, filled several rooms of this same large building. The first room, given to Drepung's share in rebellion, displayed a large stack of bayoneted rifles of both British and American makes, some Smith and Wesson 38s, Colt 45s, an American sten-gun, a US Thompson submachine-gun, some British Enfields and German Mausers, and a large quantity of dum-dum bullets, also from Britain and America in the original boxes, the soft-nosed lead bullets that are illegal in war because they unnecessarily shatter the man they wound. This room also had a dummy figure of the State Oracle, in the authentic jewel-bedecked robes and crown, together with the instructions given him by the rebels to slant all history and predictions "to favor Tibet's independence."

A room on "Economic Exploitation" repeated the statistics of Drepung's manorial holdings and serfs,

and gave considerable detail on how those 25,000 agricultural serfs and 16,000 herdsmen were exploited. Besides the ordinary payments in labor or grain for the use of land, there were endless kinds of taxes, a dog tax, a cat tax, a chicken tax, a donkey tax, another tax for the bell worn by an animal, a tax on owning a flower-pot, a poll-tax, a birth tax and a special tax at death whereby ear-rings and ornaments of the dead went to Drepung. Grain measures were shown, indicating that Drepung used a small *ke* which held 25 catties, in measuring out seed to the serfs, and a big *ke*, holding 32 catties, in collecting grain in return. A board used to level the grain in the measure was convex on one side and concave on the other and made a difference of another pound according to which side was used. The total difference in measuring grain gave the serf a *ke* of 24 catties, (26.4 pounds) and took in return a *ke* of over 33 catties (36 pounds), a difference of over nine pounds or some forty percent on the weighing alone.

One-fourth of Drepung's total income came from usury. Interest on loans was supposed to be twenty percent but actually went much higher through many conditions, of which the difference in measures for grain was only one. Among the peculiar feudal forms of debt was one called "Chimeijimei" whereby the monastery rented out livestock to herdsmen and exacted in return a definite amount of butter or wool per year, the catch being that the animals thus rented were usually old and ready to die, and sometimes

there were no actual animals but only promises, yet the serf and his descendants were bound to these "rental" payments for generations, long after any original animals died. Another form of livestock rental known as the "birth and death rental" demanded a fixed amount of increase in the livestock, and if the cattle or sheep failed to bear the expected offspring or if any died, the unhappy herdsman was held for the payment. When debts of this or any other kind piled up beyond ability to pay, there might be the "person mortgage", by which a man became slave for twenty-five years under conditions which he rarely survived.

Drepung also carried on considerable business including the import of opium, a quantity of which, taken from the monastery stores, was displayed. Much of Drepung's trade was with the monastery serfs. When inspectors visited distant pastures they would take trade goods like brick tea, and force herdsmen to take a brick which normally cost a silver dollar and pay for it eighteen pounds of yak butter worth twenty times as much.

The privilege of making these inspection trips was much sought after by upper lamas, who often paid heavy bribes for the right to make a tour of properties, because on these journeys the "inspectors" not only made huge profits from this compulsory trade, but also had to be given presents by every manor at which they stopped. Each manor visited also had to supply women not only for the lama inspector but for his

large retinue; this was called "accompanying corvée". Lamas who had accompanied the "Foul-mouthed Tiger" on one such trip stated that at one stop all women of sixty households had been raped by the lama and his party, under the name of "accompanying corvée".

Similar burdens were imposed on the inhabitants of Lhasa city during the three weeks of the great Prayer Festival when the Iron Bar Lamas of Drepung ruled the town. They taxed donkeys, dogs, cats, chickens, flower-pots, cigarettes, snuff, wells, ponds and even taxed women for having two braids. These Iron Bar Lamas kept track of civil and criminal cases and blackmailed both sides for decisions. Merchants had to pay them heavily for the right to exist. If an Iron Bar Lama leaned his bar against anyone's gate, the householder must at once make gifts, lest some fault be found with the gate which would bring a fine. Pilgrims were taxed for scripture reading and for making pilgrimage around the Lingkor. Perhaps the oddest tax was on snow-fall; if snow fell in a man's yard or in front of his house — the month was February — he paid a "snow tax" to the Iron Bar Lama who had "brought him the snow". The new lama "activists" in Drepung had worked it out during the *san fan* campaign that an Iron Bar Lama could collect some sixty thousand silver dollars during the Prayer Festival.

"Freedom of religion" was the subject of another room in the exhibition and here were compiled some

statistics on the causes that brought lamas into the monastery. Of 287 lamas living in a certain section of Loseling College, 124 had been entered by parents when they were under fourteen years old, 106 had entered "to escape corvée or debt", 31 in fulfilment of corvée or debt, 18 came as cripples unable to work, and only 6 declared they came from religious conviction. The small number who asserted religious reasons was doubtless influenced by the conditions under which the questionnaire was taken but the figure seems nonetheless significant.

Poorer lamas who came "for religion" must have found the monastery rules discouraging. For, as the exhibit showed, the poor lamas had to beg for permission and stick out their tongues, as proof that they were exposing a clean inside, before they were allowed to read the scriptures, and they were never allowed in the room where the really sacred books were kept. Part of what they now hailed as "religious freedom" was that "a poor lama can turn the big Prayer Wheel as much as he wishes", this being a road to merit formerly denied to the poor. "He can study and pray as he desires." The lower lamas and some of the upper strata had formed a "Cultural Relics Preservation Group" and had repaired many halls in Drepung and cleaned the religious relics and put in good shape the historic manuscripts. They were outraged at charges spread by Tibetan rebels in India that these relics had been removed.

The room on "Crimes of the Monastery" was the one most sensational to outsiders. This began with large piles of human skulls, at least a hundred, of which several score had been made into drums, with a human skin as membrane over the opening; it was explained that the skin was taken from a living body so that it would be flexible and resilient. Some skulls were made into bowls, mounted in silver, and a few had both silver and gold in the mounting. Two large cups made of skulls with silver mountings had belonged to Tsrijong, bodyguard of the Dalai Lama.

Here were also "leg-bones of maidens" made into horns encased in silver. We asked: "How do you know they are maidens' bones?" We were told that this was demanded by the "monastery regulation"; only "maidens' bones" might be used for horns. There was a special organization that collected bones for the monastery. An Iron Bar Lama of Ganden had been accused of killing twelve serfs in order to get their bones.

Two skulls and two pair of arm bones were exhibited as having been brought to Drepung as proof that two herdsmen had been killed. The herdsmen had been sent to herd yaks at a place called Retsin which was very cold. Being hungry, they had killed and eaten a yak and for this the monastery had condemned them to death. A lama named Boba had been sent with five helpers to execute the sentence and bring back the proof.

Every manor belonging to Drepung had its own jail and torture system. Jails were often deliberately infested with scorpions and poisonous insects. A kind of grass called "scorpion grass" was sometimes used for flogging; it seems to have been a kind of nettle for it made the victim's body red and swollen with pain. Maiming by cutting off a hand or foot was a common form of punishment. Another way of crippling was to tie the arm or leg with a cattle skin that had been dipped in boiling salted water; this was bound in such a manner that as the skin dried it crippled the victim permanently.

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Leaving these horrors, we began to descend the monastery, terrace by terrace. We emerged on roofs where lamas sunned themselves against gilded pillars, and where other lamas blew gilded horns six feet long. Below these we came down a wide flight of stone steps on which stood a chorus of some three hundred boy lamas in red robes, while a nine-year-old boy conductor named Chaiyangtuntsung, a name much bigger than the boy, directed them from the terrace below. They were singing lustily: "Socialism Is Good".

"Is this the choir's new repertory?" I asked in amusement.

"This is our new choir," they replied. "We never had a choir. We had chanting of scripture but if small lamas had been caught singing they would have been thrashed."

As the boys finished their song and sat down on the stone steps we saw that the terrace at the foot of the steps, where the young conductor had been standing, contained a stage. Preparations for a play were under way. The boy choir was already seated as audience. Our party also sat down to see what we were told was a locally written drama, based on an actual incident of Drepung's life. It concerned the persecution of a poor peasant and his daughter by the lama known as "Foul-mouthed Tiger", who had been a *kisu* in charge of finance and business for Drepung.

The play was straight melodrama with an obvious villain. The performers threw themselves into their parts with an energy indicating that Tibetans have a taste for dramatizing, and that they do it well if a bit extravagantly. The girl with bright red sleeves in the poor hovel tried to console her aged peasant father who could not pay his debts. The old man knelt to petition the obdurate *kisu*, and then prayed before the Buddha picture and went out in despair for a last attempt to find something with which to pay. The *kisu* began to flirt with the girl but she evaded his approaches.

Since Buddha gave no help to the aged peasant, the scene then shifted to the *kisu's* apartment where the "Foul-mouthed Tiger" prepared to close in on the girl in his own rooms. His servant was ordered to have her thrown into jail for the debt and then to offer her the chance to pay it by housework in the *kisu's* house. When she arrived, the *kisu* sent his servant

away and raped the girl. The rape was done out of sight of the audience, in a bedroom adjoining the sitting-room, but the cries that came through the open door told what went on. The little boy lamas of the choir, whose faces in repose had seemed sad and empty, were smirking now to show that they knew what was occurring. Then the *kisu* returned to his sitting room, a bit too obviously rearranging his clothes and sated, and prayed in front of his Buddha picture to add to lust and brutality the touch of hypocrisy that makes villainy absolute.

We did not wait to see much more of this for we knew already what would come, since the play was based on an incident we had been told. The girl would complain to the Iron Bar Lama, and he, instead of punishing the *kisu*, would punish the girl as a "witch" who seduced a high-rank lama.

We left the drama to the youthful appreciative audience and went down another wide flight of stone steps to a lower and even wider terrace, from which loud shouts had been arising, interrupting our show.

XI. THE LAMAS OF DREPUNG

The terrace to which we descended was a long level stretch of earth from one to two hundred feet wide and darkened by a high canopy of huge trees many centuries old. Some two thousand lamas in wine-red robes were sitting on the ground in this green dimness, the smell of their unwashed bodies diffusing heavily on the still air. They faced the hill where a long narrow stage had been erected on an outcrop of rock, now softened with thick rugs. Our group of correspondents were given seats at both ends of this stage, its center being taken by the group of lamas conducting the meeting.

Between the stage and the audience stood the three accused persons, a Living Buddha and two former Iron Bar Lamas, all now deeply bowing from the waist towards the assembly in the posture customary in Tibet when accused persons face their judges; we had first seen it in the accusation meeting at Lhalu's manor some days earlier. A shout of "Yes!" went up from the crowd as we entered, and two thousand right arms shot energetically into the air in affirmative vote. The Living Buddha Nowanamda was being accused.

Living Buddhas are presumed to be reincarnations

of men in the past who became so wise and holy that they might have gone straight to Nirvana at death, had they not chosen to return to earth to help save mankind. There were a probable thousand of them in Tibet and the Tibetan areas of adjoining provinces. They out-ranked all clerical and secular dignitaries except the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni who themselves were Living Buddhas of a special type. They two alone held first rank in the feudal scale of ranks in Tibet, all other Living Buddhas holding second rank, and cabinet ministers coming only third. Living Buddha Nowanamda was now being accused by the poor lama Losangumbo who had no rank at all, being little better than a serf.

I noted at once that no attack whatever was made against the belief that Living Buddhas actually exist as holy incarnations down the ages; this was an article of faith. Nowhere in Tibet, or in the rest of China for that matter, have I seen direct attacks on religion such as were common in the early days of the Russian Revolution in the "anti-religious museums". This audience of lamas in Drepung took for granted the existence and the holiness of Living Buddhas. The accuser asserted only that Nowanamda personally was a fake.

Nowanamda, it was stated, had gained the title of "Living Buddha" by bribing the *kasha* for it, so the title was a fraud. He had been taught by an aged cleric, who was now over seventy, and Nowanamda gave no food to this aged tutor to whom he owed the

reverence all disciples owe their teachers. Was this a Buddha act? Nowanamda had claimed to converse with spirits and to foretell the future; specifically he had taken money from an old woman on the pretext of being able to cure her sickness but the woman died. Nowanamda had forced many lower lamas to take up arms and fight against the lawful government. Yet fighting is contrary to Buddha's teaching and fighting against the lawful government is especially a sin. Lastly and worst of all, Nowanamda had sold to the poorer lamas "charms guaranteeing them against wounds and death in battle" and these charms had not worked! For all of which reasons Nowanamda was a fake!

"Wasn't it he who bade us join the rebellion?" shouted the accuser. . . . The audience shouted: "Yes!" and two thousand arms rose in air.

"Confess yourself a fraud and repent!" cried the accuser. The Living Buddha made no direct reply. He was too busy warding off the small bits of padded cloth that hurtled at him through the air. Lamas to whom he had sold those "charms against wounds" were throwing them back at him, shouting: "See if these charms can protect you!" One of the rejected "charms" was passed to me; it was a small pad of reddish material, of the type used for lama's robes, with a Buddha picture pasted on it. It was supposed to be pinned on or under the robes.

We never heard whether Living Buddha Nowanamda repented, and it hardly matters to anyone but

Nowanamda. His accuser gave place to another accuser, who brought charges against one of the former Iron Bar Lamas, stating that when he, Zambala, once wore his clothes wrongly, the said Iron Bar Lama threatened to flog him within an inch of his life and only desisted when Zambala agreed to sign a pledge never to speak to any Hans. Zambala leaned from the stage over the Iron Bar Lama whom he was accusing, grabbed the latter's robe and shook it, shouting: "Didn't you cheat us and beat us and make us swear against the government?"

The audience shouted: "He did!"

Then Zambala took from his robe a piece of paper and shook it under the nose of the Iron Bar Lama, saying: "See here the pledge you made me sign." He demonstratively tore it up.

The audience came in energetically with: "Wipe out the feudal oppression!"

Accusations came fast and our interpreters could only give us brief high-lights. Bienchun, a third accuser, cried at the other Iron Bar Lama: "Once when I shouted in the temple you beat me so that I could not stand for five months." Another charged that once when he had to leave the Scripture Chanting to go to the toilet, the Iron Bar Lama flogged him very brutally for this. Another man accused the Iron Bar Lamas of fining poor lamas if they let their hair grow too long. Another claimed that the Iron Bar Lama on the right had given him three hundred lashes "and never had a reason at all".

A lower lama named Awandzaba accused the second Iron Bar Lama: "Once when I accidentally pushed against someone on my way to the Scripture Chanting, you flogged me and took all my possessions and all the possessions of my disciples." He pulled back his robe, exposing his shoulders and chest and cried: "Look at the scars of your beatings."

Then Awandzaba turned on the Living Buddha, saying: "You cheated people and got money by claiming to talk with the dead! You said the Hans would all be killed and the PLA would never enter Drepung! If you are a Living Buddha and a diviner, then how did the PLA come?"

"Confess! Repent!" thundered the audience.

"Did we ask him to get us arms from Jewel Park?" continued the accuser. "No!" the audience shouted in reply.

The faces of the assembled lamas were dark with pain and confused anger, as if they had suffered long and unendurably but were only beginning to identify the causes. They had believed, as their fathers had before them, that each man's misery is caused by the sins he committed in past incarnations which he cannot even recall, and that he can do nothing to escape misery but must accept it humbly in the hope of a better incarnation the next time. Now, under the influence of the political discussions, they began to find the cause of their long misery in the system of serfdom, and in specific acts of flogging, torture and injustice inflicted by the upper class. They began to

believe that they might do something to change this and that to change it would be a good deed, not a sin.

The interpreter told us between-times that the three accused persons were not the biggest offenders. People much worse than these had been unearthed in the discussions of the past months, but many of them had fled, and might even be in India. There was, for instance, the "arch-rebel Thubten-tsiren, who had a house of his own in the monastery and a "pearl headdress costing ten thousand silver dollars" and who was famous as a "woman-chaser". The disciples who cleaned his rooms testified that he had large quantities of foreign cosmetics and that the number of "mothers and sisters" who visited him and spent the night was very great.

A striking example of villainy was Chinpatsimei, nicknamed the "Foul-mouthed Tiger", who owned a three-storey house in Drepung with ten servants including one young lama who "shared his bed". One of his disciples had estimated that his master "had raped over a thousand women in the thirty-five years between his twentieth and fifty-fifth birthday". In his prime Chinpatsimei had managed a branch monastery of Drepung's for six years, during which, said his disciples, "he raped nearly all the young women in the six surrounding estates." Even after he was sixty, "whenever he visited a manor, they had to supply a woman serf to his bed". It was charged that he had tried to rape the wife of his steward and when the woman resisted and her husband helped her,

Chinpatsimei had the couple flogged and then crippled by the "dried skin torture" after which he exiled them to the frozen, almost uninhabited wastes of Heiho.

In connection with Chinpatsimei it was stated that young lamas of tender age had been in special demand by the upper lamas as sexual objects, and that fights and even killings had taken place over the possession of handsome boys. . . . There was no way of checking such stories nor did we try to. . . . The mere repetition of such accusations by lamas who had been "disciples" of upper lamas whom they now accused, testified to a "way of life" in Drepung, if not to the precise incidents.

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Leaving the meeting, I picked up a group of four lamas who were willing to talk and we found a quieter and sunnier row of stone steps at the end of the terrace, where the privacy and sunlight were a welcome change from that sombre assembly under the trees. With us went, as interpreter, a comely young Tibetan woman named Nobudzoma, a former serf who had run away to study in interior China and who was now a member of the "working team" reforming Drepung. She wore a long gray-green dress with pink undersleeves, and had very neat and abundant glossy black hair.

The four with whom I thus sought exclusive interview were of varying ages: Jambasheva, aged 30,

whose home was near Lhasa and who was the most vocal of the group; Losantienba, aged 45, who had walked all the way from Szechuan and had not seen his family for twenty-two years; Ishennienma, aged 31, who remains in my memory chiefly from the long rosary which he kept twisting around his wrist; and Tsashi-tsejen, aged 25, whom I never had time to question in detail and who took part only in the general questions I asked.

Jambasheva, with whom I began, said that he was put in Drepung at the age of seven, and had lived in the monastery twenty-four years. "My family lives not far from Lhasa, and the son of our master became a lama in Drepung and wanted a servant, so he took me at the age of seven. I was called a disciple but was actually his servant, to sweep, to cook, to clean, to carry out his will in any way he chose."

"How did he treat you?" I asked.

"For food he gave me the spoiled left-over *tsamba*, and of this two small bowls a day. My hunger was never stilled. When anything went wrong I was beaten for it. When I was eleven, dark spots appeared on my face and for this he beat me, and put me out of the monastery, but later I came back. When I was fourteen I saw a Tibetan opera and for this I was beaten and driven away again but again I returned. At eighteen my master drove me from his house entirely. Then I found another place to stay in the monastery, a small hut of mud and rock where I could neither stand nor lie at length but could curl for

shelter. For this I paid rent by working for the upper class lama who owned the hut. Whenever my master saw me he cursed me and called me names and said bad things against my family, and when he went to his home to visit he told my family bad things against me and he never let me visit them at all."[1]

"Why did you stay in the monastery and keep coming back to it, if you were treated so badly?" I asked.

"A serf cannot live without an owner," replied Jambasheva. "He would be driven about and punished as outlaw."

From the age of eighteen Jambasheva had lived by begging, "both inside and outside the monastery", but never got enough to satisfy hunger. He went daily to the Scripture Chanting because, "If you did not go, you were beaten, and if you went, you got buttered tea, four cups in the Main Chapel after Scripture Chanting, but it is made with unboiled water and there is very little tea or butter in it. In Loseling College they gave you four cups of buttered tea which was better, but this was only at festivals. When a big contribution was made to the monastery, most of it went to the top lamas, but some of it went to give extra food to all the lamas.

"Sometimes I came back from the Scripture Chanting so beaten that I could not stand up because I had

[1]I did not ask J. whether his service was partly sexual but the tensions that surrounded his master's attitude and his frequent expulsions and return, and especially his expulsion at the age of eighteen when as ordinary servant he was grown and able, seem to indicate that it was.

done something incorrect in the reading or the tea drinking. The upper lamas sat on mattress-pads but the poor lamas sat on the stone floor and it is not easy to squat correctly for hours on cold stone. In drinking the buttered tea there is a correct way to present the cup and a correct way to hold it and drink it and if in any of these things you are incorrect you are beaten. If the *kisu* comes to any place where you are and you do not see him as he comes and at once bow and pay attention, then also you are beaten. If you even raise your eyes above the knees of the top lamas they beat you and they have the right to take out your 'disobedient eyes' for this, but I did not see this done."

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The next biography came from forty-five-year-old Losantienba. At first he told me that he had walked all the way from Szechuan to Lhasa because he "wanted to be a lama in Lhasa". This seemed like a strong religious inclination until I questioned further. Then I learned that he had come to Lhasa to escape maltreatment and even death at the hands of a Living Buddha in Szechuan who was master of his entire family and who demanded the boy as his "personal servant" at the age of thirteen, on the grounds that, since there was already an older brother "to carry on the family", Losantienba must be given to the monastery.

"My parents did not agree to let me go," said Losantienba, "so the master had them beaten and said they

must pay fifty *pings* of silver for my release. They had no silver so they had to send me to the monastery to serve the Living Buddha. But then my elder brother was killed working in a tin mine, and my mother begged for my release to be her eldest son. But still she had no fifty *pings* and I could not get release. Then my master gave me a message to carry and said I must be very punctual with it, and there was no time left to be punctual and my mother thought he sought excuse to kill me, and she said I had better go to Lhasa as a lama and save my life. So I walked all the way to Lhasa, begging my way. I was then seventeen."

After two years in Lhasa, Losantienba had gone back home to see his mother. The move was ill-advised. "My master heard of it and captured me, and had me beaten with over two hundred lashes and thrown into jail in hand-cuffs for a year. The marks of that beating and those hand-cuffs are still on me after twenty-five years. When I had been in jail for a year my mother succeeded in raising fifty *pings* of silver among the neighbors and bought my release. After that I worked two years as a coolie, staying at home where I was now the eldest son. But we heard again that my master planned to capture me and ill-treat or kill me, so I left a second time for Lhasa when I was twenty-three. I labored here for the monastery and I paid twelve taels a month for a hut and they gave me *tsamba* but I had nothing to mix with my *tsamba* but cold water, for I had no possessions but my

beggar's staff and begging bowl for these twenty-two years. In all these years I never dared go home again for fear of that master."

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There was no time to get detailed biographies of the two other lamas for there were several general questions I wanted to ask. The first was about food and clothing. By putting together what they told with statistics gathered later, I learned that the lower lamas were supposed to get from 135 to 150 pounds of grain a year and four pounds of butter, which was not even half as much food as they needed. They got "four bowls of buttered tea" daily in the Scripture Hall but only one brick of tea was used for several thousand lamas so it was water rather than tea that was served. They were supposed to get in money a hundred taels of Tibetan silver, which amounted to between two and four American dollars a year. Actually they seldom got this, for they had many fines to pay and these were deducted, so that the lower lamas were nearly always in debt.

A *kanpo* got nominally thirty times as much as a poor lama, but actually he got much more than that. There was no standard of comparison for the *kanpo*, coming from a noble family, usually held personal property in one or more manorial estates. Moreover, the entire financial power of the monastery was in the hands of the *kanpos* who ran the Lhachi Conference, and who not only diverted much of the in-

come to their personal possession but sold the right of inspecting manorial estates and other privileges.

The four lamas told me that their clothes had been rags. When I looked at the robes they were wearing, which were neat enough, they said that these had been given them after the putting down of the rebellion. The clothing and materials left in Drepung by rebels who fled had been confiscated by the "Committee for Putting Down Rebellion" and given to the most ragged of the lamas for clothing. At the same time the handling of grain had been placed in the Committee's hands, so that all lamas were now properly fed.

"The *kisu* made the serfs in the manors give the best grain," they said, "but this good grain went to the upper lamas or was sold for profit. We lower lamas got poor grain mixed with chaff and gravel. After the rebellion was crushed we opened the *kisu's* storehouse and found much grain but the grain on the bottom was so old that it was decayed."

Since Drepung was called a "teaching monastery" I asked whether any of the four had learned to read. All shook their heads. Jambasheva alone had made the attempt.

"From self-study," he said, "I learned to read a very little in the scriptures, but this cannot be used to read the newspaper for the scriptures are not in the language of every day. To study further was impossible, because of the tasks I had to do in order to live." None of the others, "disciples" in Drepung

for years or even decades, knew even a single letter of the alphabet.

When lamas were first taken into the monastery, they told me, they were graded as to the years of labor they must give. Some had ten years, some twenty or more; they carried water and wood and other loads and swept the ground and cleaned the snow and made repairs. During this period they were "new lamas", the lowest grade. After this they became "competent lamas", and were supposed to have better work, but in this better work they had to "show hospitality" to the upper lamas, and this cost money so that they had to go in debt. . . . Only by a very hard climb could a lama hope to reach the higher grades where he was given a chance to study.

"But the sons of nobles have it easy," they declared. "They rise to a high post very fast." It was "open secret" that the post of Iron Bar Lama could be had for a thousand silver dollars. They claimed to know twenty cases of lamas who were "flogged into cripples" because they could not give presents to upper lama-despots. One sixteen-year-old lama who "failed to respect" the nephew of Chinpatsimei had been killed. This was brought to the attention of the Iron Bar Lama, and he took cognizance of the killing by fining, not the killer, but the "teacher" of the small lama.

"The monastery is a hell in the universe that you cannot escape from," these four lamas said.

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"How did you first hear of the People's Liberation Army and any of the new ideas?" I asked. Jambasheva gave the answer, with the others chiming in.

"We heard at the Great Prayer Festival at New Year that there would be rebellion. The top lamas said that the PLA intended to destroy religion and kill all old people and that they were 'living demons, eating human flesh'. We made preparations to fight them. Some went to Jewel Park to fight and the rest assembled here on the eastern hill and were given arms. Some were afraid to fight and ran away but then we were told that if anyone ran away his whole family would be thrown into the river. Then we heard gunshots from Jewel Park and it was said that Sera Monastery was half destroyed.[1] So many lamas ran away from Drepung while the rest dug trenches and prepared to fight.

"After two days there came two Tibetans of good repute from the valley below us, who said that some of the PLA were already down in the valley and had asked them to come to Drepung to explain that all law-abiding lamas would be protected, and religion would be protected, and all who had been coerced into fighting would not be punished, and those who had fought, if they surrendered, would come to no harm. Then all the poor lamas wanted to surrender at once but the two Iron Bar Lamas and one *kanpo* hid arms under the Buddha statues and prepared to

[1]This was not true.

fight. The three *kanpos* you met today said: 'Let us discuss this with the PLA'. All the poor lamas supported this and the others could not fight without the poor lamas, so representatives were sent to the valley to talk with the PLA. It was decided to surrender.

"Then the PLA came into Drepung and found the weapons under the Buddha statues and arrested the top lamas who hid them but nobody else. After this the soldiers went away but sent the working teams. They arranged for everyone to study the policy of the government, and now we live very happily for there is no more flogging, and everyone has now for the first time religious freedom and also enough to eat."

"Does this food come from Drepung's estates or from government subsidy?" I asked.

They replied that it came from the stores already in the monastery, and there was enough grain to feed everyone for six months. No more grain would come from the manorial estates, because the government had confiscated these, since Drepung was a rebel, and all their grain from now on would go either to the government or to the manorial serfs who produced it. So in six months the lamas in Drepung were expected to work out plans for survival, both as a monastery and as individuals. Those who wished to leave had freedom to leave but the government asked them not to leave in a hurry but first to plan the monastery's future and then decide what they themselves individually wished to do.

It was expected in future that able-bodied lamas would labor for their own support, that the monastery would still collect contributions from believers, and these would be honestly spent under a committee on which all lamas had a voice, and that, if all this was not enough to support the lamas, the government would give a subsidy. Just how this subsidy would come they did not know but it was understood that Drepung was entitled to upkeep as an "historical monument" and that aged lamas who could not work would get "relief", and perhaps there would be payments for learned lamas who were needed as teachers and theologians. The learned lamas would be in charge of religion, but all arrangements for life and work would be "democratically" decided.

I asked the four lamas their individual plans. Each had his view.

Said Jambasheva: "Now that there is no more flogging and torture, I think I shall continue the religious life. I also expect to do productive labor for my support and to help the Tibetan people, perhaps by irrigation work. I want to learn to read and write and study the scriptures."

Said Losantienba: "I have spent half a life in darkness and without freedom. I do not want any more of it. Now the people stand up and I want to stand up with them. I want first to go to Szechuan to see my old mother, who is seventy-seven years old and whom I have not seen in twenty-two years. Then I will decide what to do. I do not think I shall stay in

a monastery, but in any case I shall take part in productive labor, either in Lhasa or Szechuan."

Said Ishennienma: "My life in the past was worse than the life of a draft animal. Nonetheless I want the religious life. I want to be a good lama and also to take part in useful labor, and also to study more."

Said Tsashi-tsejen: "Life in the monastery has been too painful. Under no conditions do I want to stay, or to be a lama any more. I will remain in Drepung until we finish the political classes and learn the government policies. Then I will go away to seek work. My family lives near by."

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In two long personal interviews with Wei Huang of the Religious Affairs Committee of the new Tibet government, and Liang Kun, of the Working Committee, the picture of Drepung given us by its lamas was confirmed and supplemented by a general view of the government's policy towards monasteries in Tibet.

The charges of widespread physical destruction of monasteries, which were made abroad, were flatly denied. No monastery in Tibet has been physically destroyed, they stated. Nor has any monastery been looted of relics or treasure by the PLA. (I checked this statement in many quarters and found it everywhere confirmed.) A few monasteries were damaged in battle, and these have been repaired. The only serious damage was to Ramogia Monastery in Lhasa

where heavy fighting took place, damaging part of the roof and one wall. This is under repair but will take time. The government's attention to repair of monasteries seemed worth noting. I was amazed to learn that repairs had been made in Drepung to the extent of five hundred man-days of labor and the government had paid for this, though it was caused not by any war damage but by long neglect.

"Tibetan building uses a kind of brittle cement called Aga, that cracks in winter," they said. "We have paid for repairs to the Main Chapel, to various buildings in four of the colleges and to the Dalai Lama's private residence there."

"Why did you repair the Dalai Lama's residence?" I asked in surprise. "He never lives there and won't come back to it, and nobody else is permitted to use it after him, since that is sacrilege."

Wei looked at me with reproof as he replied: "That house cost Tibetan workers a lot of labor and we must respect their labor and keep the building in shape for whatever the future brings."

The form of organization we had seen in Drepung — the various Tsatsang, or colleges, the Lhachi Conference of top administrators, the *kisu* for finance and business — was typical of the other monasteries, according to both Wei and Liang. The government's method of dealing with it was also typical. . . . A "working team" was introduced consisting largely of Tibetan personnel, and a "Committee to Put Down Rebellion" was formed from the lamas themselves for

temporary political study and investigation. In Drepung, said Wei, they expected this team to end meetings in about a fortnight more. Then it would be dissolved; its last act would be to help set up a new administration for the monastery. The former religious leaders would remain in charge of religious activities, but administration of daily life would be under a "democratic administration" in which the lower lamas would have representation. Some offices would automatically be abolished; there was no further place for a manager of manorial estates or the collection of usury, since these activities would not remain.

"The system of organization will be discussed by the lamas themselves," said Wei Huang. "All that we require is that they obey the laws of the land. They are no longer allowed to own manorial estates, or to run courts, jails, tortures and flogging. They must respect the 'freedom of person' of the lower lamas, who have the right to attend or not to attend services, and even the right to leave the monastery entirely. We hope they won't leave too fast."

This opened several interesting questions. "Are they free to attend or not to attend your political courses?" I asked. Wei Huang laughed.

"We expect them to attend for since they took part in armed rebellion their first duty is to know the laws of their country. We might consider them prisoners and make this a requirement, but we don't. We hold the classes and discussions near their residences, and

those who don't come will be reminded, but if they persist in staying away, nothing is done. Most of the younger lamas want to come. It is their first glimpse of the possibility of a better life. But there are some among the older lamas who never leave their rooms, but sit constantly in meditation staring vacantly at the world. We do not bother them. They have disciples who take them their food."

This led me to ask about hermits who are reputed to stay in caves for years. Wei told me that there was such a hermit in the west end of Lhasa district, who had lived for fifty years in a cave on a mountain without coming down. "The working team asked if they should go up to investigate and I told them not to interrupt his meditations yet, but to get in contact with his disciples and see if the old man was getting enough to eat. . . . If not, then they should add some food to his basket. By winter they should be acquainted with the disciples and then perhaps they might make a trip to see how the old man gets along. Fifty years is a long time." Wei's tones combined pity for the old man with pride in the tenacity of the hermit with the longest record in the Lhasa area and perhaps among hermits of the world.

Were all monasteries in Tibet required to go through these changes, I asked. Reports from the Panchen Erdeni's area, which our group also visited, indicated that there was no military control there, no working teams and, as yet it seemed, no reform. The lamas in Tasilhumpo, for instance, were very

numerous but also very ragged. No clothing seemed to have been confiscated from upper lamas to clothe the poor.

The answer to this was given flatly and clearly by both Wei Huang and Liang Kun combined.

"First, all monasteries in Tibet without exception, whether rebels or non rebels, *must* obey the laws. This means they can no longer operate courts, jails, floggings, tortures, nor own serfs and manorial estates, nor run a business of usury. They must be democratized to permit the lower lamas' representation in all affairs of their daily livelihood. The difference between rebel and non-rebel monasteries is that the rebel manorial estates and feudal properties are confiscated, while the state pays compensation to the non-rebel monasteries. Another difference is that the biggest rebel monasteries are put under temporary military control while the non-rebel monasteries are expected to reform themselves. These differences are important but do not affect the future obligation of all monasteries to obey the same laws.

"Secondly, we do not expect to enforce all this at once. It is not the function of the military nor have we enough personnel. We respect the Panchen Erdeni and the non-rebel monasteries and wish to give them time to make their reforms. The Panchen Erdeni has greatly helped the reform by putting behind it the highest religious authority in Tibet. We are not sending inspectors to check monasteries on his territory to see how fast they comply. We leave

them to the Panchen Erdeni. We already know that some of his monastery chiefs are inquiring how things are done in Drepung in order to plan their own changes. We also know that any monasteries that fail to reform will in time be corrected by their own lamas and by the Tibetan people and this is the proper way.

"The task of our military control is simpler and more temporary. We are not trying to reform all the monasteries in Tibet. We are not going to run monasteries by military control. We are doing a six months' job with limited personnel and we expect to finish in another month. We picked the ten biggest rebel monasteries, put them under control and helped their lower lamas organize and we try to make them examples of what a democratic law-abiding monastery should be. We expect other monasteries to learn from them and copy them; Drepung alone has seven hundred branches that should learn from Drepung. The rest can be left to the Tibetan people and to the lamas themselves and to the new democratic government in which the peasants and lower lamas will have a voice. If any monastery keeps on flogging lamas, the lamas will just leave.

"We ourselves did not know the conditions of life in the monasteries when we began this task. All that we knew was that Drepung had carried on armed rebellion and must be brought to order. Through our talks with the lower lamas, through the discussions in political classes, and through the accusation

meetings, the entire relation of this monastery to the exploitation of the Tibetan people, to its own lower lamas and to rebellion became exposed, both to us and to the lower lamas themselves. This stage of development is ending; within a month, our working teams will leave.

"We also learned through this how deeply the Tibetan people hate the monasteries. Drepung has committed so many crimes in the past that there was a wide demand in Tibet to abolish Drepung entirely. We felt that, because of its religious prominence and past fame, it was better to preserve it and reform it from within. As a national historic monument it should be supported permanently but how long it will remain a monastery depends on the choice of its own lamas and such Tibetan people as choose to be lamas. This is for them to say."

"Will you forbid the sending of small children into the monastery?" I asked. "Will you allow parents to send them for religious education?"

The reply was that this question had not arisen and was not likely to arise. "Our monasteries offer no education for children," they said. "Do not confuse them with the religious schools of the West. A few top lamas like the *gesi* are very learned in Buddhist theology, but most lamas, even at the age of fifty, cannot even read and write. Children are not sent to monasteries for schooling. The nobles seldom send young children. The serfs were compelled to send them. The parents never liked to do it and are not

likely to continue now that they are free to refuse."

I expressed surprise at Wei Huang's hope that the lower lamas "would not leave the monasteries too fast". Liang Kun confirmed this hope, saying that most of the poor lamas were "in haste to leave the monastery" and "we have to make persuasion to induce them to stay". Why should a Communist Committee induce lamas to stay in a monastery, I asked. It would be hard to convince anyone in the West that the Communists could be sincere in this.

Both Wei and Liang replied that there were many reasons why "the lamas should take time to make up their minds". They said: "Just now the repute of the monasteries is very low because so many crimes have been exposed, so the desire to flee from monasteries is very high. But if tens of thousands of lamas leave at once, it will be hard for the Tibetan people to find housing and jobs for them, and it will be hard for the older lamas, many of whom are unfit to leave, to find people to care for them. The social organization already established should not be too suddenly broken up.

"Each lama should consider what it is he is seeking. Does he want to go home? Let him visit his family. Does he want to marry? Let him consider that some monastic sects permit marriage and this can be discussed with the monastery where he is. If he has any desire for the religious life, he should not yield to a temporary revulsion. And in any case, before he leaves, he should give the benefit of his experience

and ideas for the monastery's reorganization. Here is a body of men, with considerable labor power, with housing, with buildings for assembly, with land for cultivation. Someone will have to decide what to do with these monasteries. Those who have lived in them longest should have some ideas. They should discuss with their fellows what useful activities can go on here. They should discuss the problems they have in common, of marriage and production, and the relation of these problems to the future of Tibet. This is to the benefit of the lamas' own development, and also beneficial to the country. Meantime the village they come from will keep their share of land for them, farming it through the Peasants' Association, to give them time for careful choice."

The reasons seemed to me clear and sound, and full of hope for the future of Tibet.

XII. THEIR FIRST OWN HARVEST

The first reaping in the Lhasa area was announced for early September in a barley field of sixty acres in the southern part of the east suburb. I went to see. In Loka the harvest was already in full swing and in Takun area finished; on one or two estates in Loka they had begun to distribute the land. Other members of the correspondents group went to report it. Mine was the first in the Lhasa area which is further north and higher in elevation. Harvest is later there.

We approached the field on a dirt road, jolting slowly over mud-holes. Our first sight was not at all impressive. The reaping was some distance from the road, beyond a rough area of tall grass. We left the cars and picked our way through weeds and grass and burrs towards the distant crowd of people bending in the sun. There was a far sound of singing. But as we advanced, the people annoyingly receded towards the distant hills. They seemed moving faster than we.

I was getting tired from the rough ground, the heat of the sun, and the many irregular ditches of water over which we had to jump. At first I thought they

might be for irrigation, later they seemed to be surplus water, drained rather casually from the field. Still later we learned that they were both. Certainly this field showed little order. We came to a stream so wide that our Tibetan hosts waded it by taking off their shoes and rolling up their trousers. One of them took me over on his back, which exhausted me more than it seemed to exhaust the porter. I was becoming more tired from just getting there than the Tibetan peasants were from bringing in the grain.

We finally reached an open space, cleared of standing grain but very full of rough stubble. It was still hard to walk and the sun was very hot, so I sank on a pile of straw not yet taken away, got out notebook and camera and looked around for the reaping. More than a hundred people were at various distances at the fringe of the field but most of them chose this moment to sit down on the ground and rest. They began to sing. The circles were far enough apart so that they did not all sing the same tune. A few women were still bringing sheaves to toss on a great pile not far from me, and I took some pictures. They also sat down. The only people still reaping appeared to be half a dozen men of the People's Liberation Army who had come to help. They were lustily swinging away at the barley with hand sickles; they wore big round hats against the sun. I found enough energy to photograph them. They presently sat down too.

It seemed at first a rather disorderly harvest. The ground was very rough, there were no even rows, the barley was mixed with a lot of wild grass, tangled, bent over, uneven in height. To me it seemed just random ears of barley in a sea of grass. And why were there so many reapers? The field, I had heard, belonged to twenty-five *tsaiba* families. Far more than a hundred people were getting it in.

Yes, replied my Tibetan hosts, the reapers included not only the *tsaiba* families, but many people who came to help them, from two inhabitants' committees in Lhasa and also from the People's Liberation Army. A mid-morning rest was being taken. The *tsaibas* themselves were clearly much impressed by the dignity of an occasion that had brought so much attention from so many friends. They were having a wonderful time receiving guests and showing them where to reap. This kind of thing had never happened before.

The reapers began to rise from their brief rest. The singing continued as they reaped. Again they were pushing out the edges of the field faster than I could keep up. Men and women cut grain, tied it in sheaves, tossed the sheaves on great piles. A *tsaiba* named Norbu had halted near me and began to explain. I was not impolite enough to tell him what I thought of the field but I approached it delicately by asking what crop they expected to get.

To my surprise he said the crop would be unusually good for this field. "We shall get about eleven

kes of grain from each *ke* of seed," he said with satisfaction. "This is not a good field; it has too much wild grass. It is the field we twenty-five *tsaibas* had for our own food. We never had time to get the grass cleaned out because we had to work the master's land and do all our labor duties for him before we could work on our own field. This field always suffered; it was never fertilized nor irrigated, and not much weeded. We never got more than five *kes* of crop from one of seed. This year the rebellion was quelled just before we began sowing. We had no seed to sow until we got the loan from the government; the rebels had taken all our grain. We knew this crop would be our own. We fertilized twice and weeded three times and we shall now get eleven *kes* of crop for every *ke* of seed." Norbu added that they would also have a crop from a better field that they used to sow for the master.[1]

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[1]Harvest figures are difficult in Tibet and not exact. They are reckoned not in amount of grain per unit of land, but in crop per unit of seed, and the average has been very low, at four times the seed. The size of a *ke* differs, for the master had two measures. A big *ke*, when he took the crop from the serfs, might run to 34 pounds, a small *ke*, when he gave out seed, might be only 27 pounds. A *ke* of ground was the amount that a *ke* of grain would sow, which was about one sixth of an acre. Taking a *ke* as 27½ pounds, the past yield of this field was 13.7 bushels per acre, the present yield 30 bushels and the expected yield on the good field 55 bushels. All these figures are higher than the Tibet average but the Lhasa area is a good area.

I would not have thought the field had ever been weeded, or that it had any crop that could be considered good. But Norbu knew, and was clearly happy. I asked what he would do with his grain. He replied that he would keep some for seed, sell some to buy clothing for his children, and grind the rest into *tsamba*, the barley flour that is Tibet's staple food, and that is first parched and then ground, so that it can be carried about in a bag, rolled into a paste at any time or place and eaten, already more or less cooked.

Norbu revealed more reasons for his smiling face. In the past, he said, his family "never ate well" and had only ragged or patched clothing. This year they would have enough *tsamba* and even some vegetables. In the past, if you planted vegetables, you never had them to eat. This year the government lent seed without interest and just at the time when things looked hardest when the rebels had taken the grain and the time had come to sow. The fields had been sown without trouble and now, at harvest, you could reap whatever field was first ready, without doing the master's field first. So many friends came to help that it was very merry! Moreover, you had freedom! You could stop and talk with a guest. Formerly if you even washed you face or combed your hair or took a bath so that an overseer saw you clean and tidy, he would call you a fancy idler and give you a task.

It seemed pretty good to Norbu. Next harvest would be even better. For the next sowing would

have clean seed. In the past the grain all went into the masters' storage, and all the seed in Tibet was rather mixed and usually with some grass. This year they would keep their seed grain clean.

When we came to the stream-crossing on the way back I told them I knew a much better way to carry people than on backs. I showed them the four-hand-hold I had learned in mountaineering and two of them carried me across with much interest in learning this new way.

•

Reports next came from Loka and Takun where the harvest was further advanced because the elevation is lower. These areas lie side by side southeast of Lhasa with Takun furthest east. Both, especially Loka, whose cultivated area is 83,000 acres to Takun's 33,000, are known as the "granary of Tibet". "Loka" means "south of the mountain"; it borders on India. It has good soil and climate, a crop yield of sixteen to twenty-two bushels per acre, sometimes running up to twenty-seven, and a population of 160,000.

Loka boasts itself the origin of Tibetans, and even the origin of all men on earth. The mythical monkey-king who married a she-devil and thus begat mankind — a Tibetan myth that antedated Darwin by centuries — was said to have lived in Loka, near its capital Chetang. It is better proved that Tibet's first notable king, that Srontsan Gambo who married Princess Wen Cheng of the Tang Dynasty, was king in Chetang before he moved his capital to Lhasa.

Most of the Lhasa nobles came from Loka; like Srontsan Gambo they found in its granary a wealth with which to expand. They kept the Loka estates, sometimes with as many as ten thousand serfs. This was especially true of the big rebel leaders. Surkong had six Loka estates. Khemey, whose estate we saw in the "village east of Lhasa", had also a Loka estate. The rebels made their main base in Loka, using it for air-drops of foreign weapons and as camping ground for the Khampas. Later, after the rebels were crushed in Lhasa, they saw in Loka their "second capital" from which to lead a long guerrilla war all over Tibet. For this, Loka was adapted by its grain supply, its long border with India, on which sixteen passes led abroad, and the combination of defense with easy access to much of Tibet given by the Tsang-po River which borders Loka on the north.

The rebels forgot the human factor. The peasants of Loka were so brutally handled by the rebels for an entire year that they became especially energetic in helping the People's Liberation Army. As we saw in an earlier chapter, the "political campaign" waged by the PLA with the help of the local peasants brought in more rebel surrenders than the military campaign. By the time the rebellion was crushed in Loka, it was rather late for sowing. So the PLA made special efforts to rush the seed grain, to replace what the rebels had looted, and the policy of pledging the entire harvest of the rebels to the tillers — a pledge made to stimulate sowing — was first made in Loka. The

PLA also lent horses and men to help the sowing. All this cooperation brought about in Loka an exceptionally energetic reform drive. The first distribution of "land to the tiller" came here.

When our group of correspondents visited Loka in early September, they found the "three abolitions drive" practically completed. The Loka agents of the rebel owners had been arrested; some were in jail, others, after "struggle meetings" with the peasants, resided in their former homes under surveillance by their former serfs. Feudal debts had been cancelled to the amount of 1.7 million bushels, more than ten bushels per capita, hence more than enough to feed the Loka population for two years. This gives an indication of the weight of the feudal debt. Sixteen thousand *nantsams* had been freed, not only by abolition of servitude but by some provision of housing and food. The distribution of land had begun in several places and on some estates had been completed. Loka was the try-out; nowhere else in Tibet had land been distributed yet.

The policy of distribution was appearing. Former serfs were usually given the land they had been accustomed to till. No attempt was made to reach exact equality. *Tsaibas* had regular plots that were already known. *Nantsam* got parts of the master's field on which they had worked as field hands. It was usually better soil than the *tsaibas'* land, so the *nantsams* were given a smaller piece. This allocation better suited their needs, for *nantsam* had smaller

families, and no livestock or implements except what they got in the distribution from the master's estate. *Nantsam,* moreover, were the most likely to form mutual aid teams quickly to work together on the same land they had worked on for the master. By having their land together, they would more readily be able, with only a few draft animals, to reach a good yield.

Landlords, their agents, and relatives of rebels also got land if they chose to work it; even men who fled with the rebels had land reserved for their return unless they had been ring-leaders. For men who had left the area to become lamas, similar shares were reserved until their final choice should become clear. All this extra land for absentees would meanwhile be worked by the Peasants' Association and used for common village needs. If this somewhat burdened the Peasants' Association, it also strengthened its power and increased the amount of collectively managed land. The precise bit of land to be owned by each household was finally settled by exhaustive discussion among all the villagers.

Once a household got ownership of a piece of land, the enthusiasm was very great. In places visited by the correspondents where the land had been distributed for three weeks, mutual aid teams had been quickly formed and fertilizer gathered. In Ksesong Manor, some 440,000 pounds of manure and rubbish had been heaped up, to be used as fertilizer. Here

the peasants also declared that they were paying more attention now to personal hygiene.

"In the past you didn't dare wash your face, for the overseer would think you were showing off, but now you wash your face several times a day. You even wash your hair and your dirty shirts. You sing out loud in the fields without worry. If you sang in the fields formerly, the boss would say: 'You'll attract the hail from heaven. Will you take responsibility for that?' But now you sing as much and as loud as you like. We put new words to the old songs. We even have dramas and dances at the rest period in the fields."

At one manor near Chetang, the correspondents came upon the actual act of land-marking by merely following the crowd.

"Half a mile out from Chetang," one of them reported, "we saw a crowd of peasants who said they were going to distribute land. We went along. On the way we fell into talk with a leading member of the Peasants' Association and he showed us the list of the amounts of land different households were to get."

The peasant leader told them that the list had been made by discussion of the peasants at several levels. The Standing Committee of the Peasants' Association first made a preliminary draft, then the entire Association discussed it, then section meetings of peasants from different fields, then the Standing Committee revised the draft in accordance with the suggestions made, and finally the Peasants' Association discussed

The first field reaped near Lhasa

The PLA helps with the reaping

Exhibition riders at harvest festival

Girls in fancy dress dispense barley wine

it and passed it. The discussion had gone on constantly for three weeks.

When the correspondents came to the field, they saw that the land was being measured off by a committee. Then the chairman announced: "This land is given to such and such a household." The new owner then drove in stakes that he had prepared and often set up a signboard with his name. Other peasants congratulated him and helped him with the stakes. As soon as anyone staked his plot, he usually went to the next plot to help his neighbor. About forty households were thus taking up land in this field; others would be given land in another field on the following day.

What may have been the first distribution of land in Loka — and if so, it was the first in all Tibet — was made on August 6th and 7th on Khemey's manor and was visited by the correspondents nearly a month later, when all the subsequent changes could already be seen. This manor was not a large one; it had 1,551 *kes* (260 acres) of cultivated land and eighty households with 393 people. About half of the households, — the twenty-nine *tsaibas* and some of the *duichuns* — had huts of stone as their regular homes and had also regular plots of land they were accustomed to cultivate and for which they paid the master either by labor or by crop. The other half, which included ten *nantsam* families and most of the *duichuns* had neither regular houses nor plots of land nor any implements or animals. The manor possessed livestock,

numbering 16 horses, 15 oxen, 31 donkeys, 147 sheep or goats.

"We went to the place where the donkeys were kept," reported the correspondents, "and we found that twenty *nantsams* had also slept there in open stone stalls, with a roof and some walls but not fully walled in."

One of the *nantsam,* a twenty-one-year-old girl named Chewang Chuchi, was now the chairman of the Peasants' Association. The correspondents talked with her and got the story of her life. Her father was a stable slave, who looked after horses. He was still alive but her mother was dead. She had a brother and two younger sisters. She herself had begun to tend yaks before she was ten years old. At the age of sixteen she had become a full time house slave in the manor, carrying water and tea and preparing food for the master, who was the resident agent of the absentee owner. She got of course no wages, but was supposed to get about 43 pounds of *tsamba* each month, and a small bit of salt and "a little piece of butter if the master was feeling happy". Once each year she was given enough coarse unbleached homespun wool for a robe, but neither underwear nor shoes.

"To get shoes I sold some of my *tsamba* and went hungry," she said.

Her master had her flogged with some frequency, sometimes with sticks, sometimes with the hard flat pieces of leather known as "palms" which are like

shoe-soles on a long stick. "All *nantsams* were flogged," she said, calmly.

During the rebellion the rebels had come to the manor-house and talked with the agent and later the agent had taken her out to a field where twelve rebels had raped her. In the quelling of the rebellion, this agent had been captured and the girl had accused him before an "accusation meeting". Others also had accused him. He was now in jail.

"In the past we lived worse than animals," the young woman chairman told the correspondents. "Now we have stood up! In the past we wore rags; now we have a change of clothing from the master's stock of goods. In the past we *nantsams* slept with the donkeys and now we sleep in the manor-house."

The land division here had been done under the chairmanship of this young woman. The first 17 *kes* (three acres) of land had been set aside for a new primary school. Then 80 *kes* (13.6 acres) had been set aside for peasants who fled in the rebellion and who might return. All this land as well as the school land would meanwhile be cultivated by the Peasants' Association. The rest of the land had been divided among the former serfs as their own property. It came to an average of 3.5 *kes* (just over half an acre) per person, some two or three acres per family. The *nantsam* had smaller shares but their land was better; it came from the master's own field which they had cultivated as slaves. Thirty-six people had been freed from the *ula* labor duties; these were the members of

tsaiba families who toiled full time without wages to pay for their family's use of a bit of land.

The *nantsam* who had slept in the donkey stalls were moved into the manor-house where every family was given one room. The former livestock and implements and furniture of the manor were divided among the *nantsam* because they had none of their own. The best room in the manor-house went to Chewang Chuchi because, as chairman, she had to receive official visits. She shared the room with her father and two younger sisters; the brother was sent away to study and become skilled. Chewang Chuchi's family got only 7 *kes* (1 1/6 acres) of land in the distribution. This was less than half the average for a family of five. She thought this proper because her father was unable to work more and her sisters too young and her brother would learn a trade.

A primary school had already been built and had twenty-one pupils; it was used in the evening for an adult school of 60 people who were learning to read and write.

Such was the distribution of land on Khemey's manor in Loka on August 6th and 7th, 1959 . . . possibly the first distribution of land in Tibet historically, and certainly one of the very first.

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In Takun[1] area the harvest was already completed. Takun is the warmest part of Tibet. Most of the land

[1]Also called Lingtze.

drops down to less than 10,000 feet elevation, so everything grows well on the good soil. Fruit trees grow wild in the woods and cultivated in the villages. Forests are thick; the timber in Lhasa comes from these forests. There is even a place in Takun where the land dips to a valley of only two or three thousand feet elevation. Bananas grow there. It is odd to think of bananas in Tibet. They might almost as well be in the South Seas for all the good they do to the rest of Tibet. There is no transport or communication to those bananas!

Because it is hard to reach, Takun is sparsely settled. The cultivated land is only some 33,300 acres, less than two fifths of the land in Loka. The crop is normally a little better than in most of Tibet; it runs to 18 or 20 bushels an acre. This year it jumped to 30 bushels. The reason of course was, as in Loka, that the rebellion was crushed and the former serfs knew that the crop would be their own. It was sown some weeks before the rebellion; when the rebels were put down, the grain already stood four to twelve inches high. After that, the peasants did a lot of weeding and watering that formerly they never had time to do.

All this I learned from Chao Chia-li, of Hsinhua News Agency, who had just returned from Takun. He knows the area; he has been there every year for the past four to check on how that area was getting on. He said that the highway from Lhasa to Chamdo runs along the northern edge of Takun, so when the

Khampas came into Tibet to help start the rebellion, they poured through the north of Takun. For an entire year they looted and devastated the people in Takun before the rebellion broke in Lhasa. Some Khampas stayed in Takun, as an offshoot from the main rebel base in Loka. The peasants in Takun were therefore very willing to help the People's Liberation Army put down these bandits. Rebels in Takun were beaten quickly; they fled into Loka and some probably went with the Loka rebels to India.

Peasants in Takun said that harvests as good as this one had sometimes occurred before, but not often. "Nine times in ten you cannot get a harvest so good," they said. "But now we have stood up and so has the harvest!"

Formerly all the crop was taken to the lord's warehouse. His agents supervised the harvest and saw to this. Half of the crop usually belonged to him anyway for the use of land; most of the rest was due him in payment on debts. On fields worked by the *nantsams* the master of course owned it all. This year when they got the big crop, the peasants didn't know where to put it. They had no storage sheds; they had never stored before. Some moved into smaller houses and put the grain in their own house. Others cut timber in the woods and built a storage shed.

Nobody thought about selling grain because they had never had grain to sell. They had never had even enough to eat. Chao thought that by the time

the land was distributed in Takun, the storage facilities would also be made available to common use. By that time the peasants would be thinking of selling some surplus grain to buy other things they need. Just now, he said, the peasants were so excited over seeing enough grain to eat that they hated to let any of it go.

Here also the peasants were singing and laughing in the reaping. Chao took down some of the songs and translated them for me. I don't know how they sound in Tibetan. They aren't very good by the time they get into English but they give the idea. The first was made up in a field in a place called Chala where a hundred people were reaping and loading grain on donkeys to take home. They made up the song and sang it while they reaped.

Big bosses in Chala stuck up very high,
Like scripture banners that blow in the sky.
In the big storm the banners came down,
And sunlight came out all over Tibet.
O, the Working Team in Chala,
The Happiness Team in Chala
Brought the sun of Chairman Mao
To warm Tibet!

Another song was written by a woman named Dumu, a *tsaiba* who in the past had seen every harvest taken for debts and forced labor duties, and sometimes after a hard year's work had had to mortgage the livestock and personal ornaments for food. This year her

family got forty bushels, enough to feed them all for a year, to keep for seed, and even a bit over. This year a lifelong debt of 500 bushels that had come down the generations, was cancelled in the reform; this was like getting ten years' food. Dumu wrote a song saying:

In the past we were a small tree!
The lords cut the twigs with knives.
The monasteries cut the trunk with an axe.
The kasha *dug the roots with a spade.*
The labor duties were knives and axes
Chipping bark and bough till the tree died.

Now the people are a great tree!
The roots grow deep in the heart of the poor.
Nobody dares to cut the boughs.
Nobody dares to dig the roots.
The Communist Party waters the tree
And keeps it ever green.

Chao told me another song but it did not come from Takun. It was sung there because it was being sung all over Tibet. Nobody knows where it started but it has become a very popular song. It runs:

The Dalai Lama's sun
Shone on the lords.
Chairman Mao's sun
Shines on the people!
Now the lords' sun sets
And our sun rises!

Songs like this sound best when sung by peasants in a harvest-field.

*

A three-day festival came in Lhasa in the first week of September. It was called the "harvest festival", but it did not come at the end of harvest, for in most of Lhasa the reaping was not quite ready to begin. The festival date had been fixed three centuries ago by the Fifth Dalai Lama on his return from Peking, where the Ching Emperor had given him the title of "the Dalai Lama, King of the Law in the Western Land of the Buddha, Spiritual Lord on Earth, All-knowing, Holder of the Thunderbolt by order of the Emperor", and assigned him the task of "unifying the tribes" of Tibet. Just why the Fifth Dalai Lama picked this date for the "harvest festival" is not stated by history, but it may have been the best time for the monasteries to inspect the harvest and decide how much to collect from it. In 1959 it hit most of the Lhasa area just before the reaping. Everyone turned out for a good time.

While the monasteries celebrated by prayers and chanting of scriptures and burning of extra butter, Jewel Park was opened for a great picnic. For the first time in Tibet's history, the people were permitted to enter the palaces. The young folks danced and sang and put on amateur drama in the main park under the trees, while the older people inspected the grandeur of the Old Palace of the Thirteenth Dalai

Lama, and the New Palace built by the present Dalai Lama and the "ferry-boat to eternity". Nobody reported their thoughts about this grandeur; probably these were somewhat mixed. It was one more step in their education and their mastery of the land.

On the following day, the peasants of a village west of Lhasa invited a few of the correspondents to join their festival in the field. They would celebrate both the beginning of reaping and the completion of the "Three Abolitions Drive".

We left the city after an early lunch and drove several miles west till, just beyond Drepung Monastery, we turned to the left on a soft dirt road that led down to a wide green pasture on which several hundred people were gathered in a very colorful crowd. At the moment of our arrival, most of them were seated on the ground, protecting themselves from the damp by hassocks, rugs or bits of canvas, and facing a canopied and decorated platform where a man was making a speech. Behind the crowd and partly encircling it were a dozen large tents of a splendor I had never seen in canvas, pavilions of different shapes and sizes, most of them clearly designed with some sense of architectural form. Still further out the landscape was encircled by mountains, some of them already dusted with the first snowfall of autumn and others struggling through a mass of changing clouds.

The meeting ended as we drew nearer and people began to disperse about the field. Several members of the Peasants' Association came to greet us and

assigned to us one of the pavilions in which we might deposit wraps and lunch-boxes and where we might take refuge in case of rain. They told us that these gay tents were "holiday pavilions" of rebel nobles, now "borrowed" by the Peasants' Association for the festival. I began to notice the pavilions in some detail. Most were of white canvas, appliquéd with "auspicious designs" in vivid dark blue, but one pavilion had an open front draped with orange scallops, and another had a rear wall of brilliant scarlet. They were all very gay.

The crowd seemed even more colorful close at hand than from a distance. Not only had all the peasants come out in their best clothing, which meant that the women had sleeves of scarlet or bright green or blue, showing through a jumper-style over-dress. But many people wore costumes that seemed especially designed either for the stage or for a festival show. Some fifty horsemen, gathering for the races, had costumes of leather and bright feathers that recalled the wild Indians of the Buffalo Bill shows of my youth. I especially noticed one giddy-looking youth who had at least a dozen colors in his trousers and jacket, topped off with a large round hat of scarlet feathers. A big quiver of feather-tipped arrows swung from his shoulder and at times almost knocked off his hat.

Girls circulated in equally festive costumes and high beaded head-dress offering barley beer and buttered tea from giant pewter pitchers of antique

design. About half of the people were settling in groups to drink buttered tea or barley beer and the other half were forming in a long procession which presently marched off towards the hills with drums and banners, and with big portraits of Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi at the head. While I was wondering whether or not to follow them, a man who had been on the stage came up to explain the festival.

Kao Tung-chuan was a member of the Party Committee of the west suburb of Lhasa under which this area came. This, he said, was a celebration by Nangawosi Village, an unusually large village of over two thousand people. In most of Tibet the manorial estate is larger than the village and contains several villages. Near Lhasa, however, the villages tend to be larger and the estates smaller. Nangawosi Village contained people from seventeen estates. The meeting of the morning, which ended as we approached, had reported the successful conclusion of the "Three Abolitions Drive". The procession that had left the pasture had gone to inspect the harvest in the fields and give awards to the best cultivation. It would be hard to follow them for the ground was rough. They would return within an hour or two. There would be displays of horsemanship, and later archery and dances.

I asked why the pictures of Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi had led the procession. Kao replied that this was the idea of the local committee which was looking for something to make the festival interest-

ing. For three hundred years they had gone to the fields with prayers and pictures of gods and this year they thought it would be more interesting to take Chairman Mao and Chairman Liu to the field and show them the best plots, and drink a toast to them over the best wheat, the best barley and the best peas. After all, Chairman Mao had something to do with this harvest. Then the best fields would be marked with flags of honor until they were reaped. Reaping was set for two or three days away.

Kao said that the *san fan* drive here had been timed to end so that its final report could be made at the festival, as it had been in the morning speech. Ten meetings had been held and thirty-three people had been accused, including agents in charge of estates, rebel lords and a few top lamas of Drepung. One of the accused, acting as agent for Tsun Tsu, the former county chief, had killed six working people, including a pregnant woman who could not pay a debt and had therefore been flogged so that she and the child in the womb had died.

The most unusual case was the killing of a peasant for sacrilege, because the peasant had the courage to kill a leopard which had come from the hills to prey upon the livestock. After the leopard had devoured several domestic animals and molested people, the courageous peasant tracked him down and killed him. The agent declared: "That leopard was a god! How dare a man lay hands on him"! The agent had the peasant flogged to death for his action. This was one

of the six "murders" of which the agent was accused.

"What constitutes a successful *san fan* drive?" I asked. "And what happens to that agent and to the other thirty-three accused?"

Kao replied that the aim of the drive was to awaken the people to the evils of serfdom, so that they realized not only their own suffering but its source in the evil system; to make them know that they are now masters in their land and need not fear their former master nor stand in awe of his opinion; to arouse them to take the responsibility for their own future. One aim is to cancel the feudal debts in the people's sight, because these are a heavy weight on the community.

"This village this morning burned debt tokens for 43,032 *kes* (21,000 bushels) of grain and 14,340 *pings* of silver, equivalent to several years' total income of the village, debts that weighed down society for generations, always increasing and never paid. They were burned today." He pointed to a heap of smouldering ashes on the edge of the pasture and added: "When all these things are done, then the drive of the 'Three Abolitions' is considered a success."

"The fate of the accused is in their own hands", Kao added. "The peasant meetings accuse but cannot judge or sentence. That lies with the court, to which the peasants can refer the charges. If a man admits his crimes and repents, he may go home from the meeting. If he is obdurate, he may go back to jail, for usually he is already under arrest. But even

if a man like that agent comes to court accused of six murders, the court will take cognizance of the fact that these killings were made not only because of the man's brutality, but because of the way of life under serfdom. Even that agent was trying to please his master and was acting under superstition. Even he may change. But in the *san fan* drive his case is incidental. The drive has succeeded when it has awakened the people."

A flurry of rain made us retreat for a short time to our pavilion. Then the sun came out, the procession came back from the fields, and we all assembled for the riding, archery and dances. The performances were to take place on a road that ran between the now empty grandstand and the slope where the people had been sitting for the meeting. They sat down again for the races, and our group was given seats of honor in the front row on hassocks covered with bright rugs.

Whence came, I asked, those wonderful costumes that looked like costumes in a theater or at a fancy-dress ball? I was told that some were actually borrowed from the theater but most of them were owned by the people. They were old national festival costumes, passed down in families. Some of the better off *tsaiba* owned such costumes, and one very bitter oppression was the need to sell for food a costume that came down generations. Some of the riders' costumes had belonged to the nobles, who kept them

for their stable-grooms to use in exhibition-riding, to the honor of the manor from which they came.

The "races" began. They were not races in the usual sense; there would have been no room for these on the road. They were competitions in horsemanship in which each rider displayed his talents. One rode with hands in air, striking poses as if his body were part of the horse's body; another hid behind the horse, hanging to a stirrup and holding himself by an arm thrown over the saddle. Others were content to show special speed or dash, displaying their elegant costumes of red, yellow or blue in amazing designs. Most of them carried great quivers of arrows over their shoulder and wore incredible hats. The horses also were decorated, some with trappings that nearly reached the ground.

When the fifty-odd horsemen had exhibited their talents several times to the crowd and to the local experts who judged them, they began to combine archery with riding. Two targets were set on the far side of the road, about one hundred and fifty feet apart, and each horseman tried to shoot arrows in succession into both targets on the gallop. Many hit the first target but few the second. The second target was too near the first, and a galloping man had hardly time to draw the second arrow from the quiver, fit it and shoot it and hit the target. Two men succeeded in hitting both targets; they were given loud applause.

Riding and archery were followed by dancing. The amateur dance troupe wore more colors than anyone

yet. Their faces were covered by masks of black and gold, their heads by drapes of scarlet brocade, their legs by very full wine-red bloomers. Over these they wore streamers of floating blue and gold down the back, and of scarlet, rose and white brocade from the shoulders. The colors were not as random as they sound; they followed an intricate pattern of wild but sophisticated harmony. Several dancers wore gold crowns of cardboard several inches wide, cut in high peaks.

At last we came to the award of the *hatas,* which apparently were given not only to a few top victors, but to all who had notably contributed in riding, archery or dance. Riders and dancers lined up in a big circle; the judges presented *hatas.* The rider with the big scarlet feather hat had for some time been exchanging glances with me that might have been called flirtatious if I had been younger. I admired his very gaudy costume and jaunty air, and he seemed impressed by the distance an aged lady had travelled to this festival.

He was barely two feet from me when the judges gave him his *hata.* He pirouetted suddenly and dropped the ceremonial scarf over my hands with a bow as low and as consciously theatrical as that of the male lead in a ballet. The crowd took notice and began to applaud. Promptly the remaining five riders also dropped their *hatas* over my arms so that I stood there under six *hatas* with people applauding. The festival had drawn in a foreign guest. Everyone seemed pleased by this.

An old peasant approached me, lifted my chin with his hand to get a good look at my face and asked my age. I replied that it was seventy-three. Murmurs of respect for my age went around.

A woman remarked: "It is very good when a woman as old as you comes all this way to see our festival and our reform".

That was for me the high point of the festival, and not because I had been chosen to receive the remark. These peasants, less than two months out of serfdom, were fully aware not only that they organized for their own future, but also that their actions were historic for the world. They wanted the world to know.

XIII. "BUILDING PARADISE"

"Build paradise on the roof of the world," ran the slogan. The Panchen Erdeni, the farm experts, the economists and statisticians, the liberated serfs, all saw it in different terms.

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"The people of Tibet will move towards happiness now," said the Panchen Erdeni to our group of correspondents who had travelled four days round trip by auto to talk with him in his ancient seat at Shigatse. He received no longer in that gaunt, dark castle, built even before the Potala Palace and very gloomy. He was building a new palace with modern comforts but it was not yet finished. So the Panchen received for the summer in a pavilion far too large and regal to be called a tent. Its colorful appliquéd "auspicious designs" on white canvas, its handsome carpet from wall to wall on the ground, suggested a court of Genghis Khan in a Peking opera. But the Panchen's was set for 1959.

"In the past our youth had little chance," he continued. "Only a few of the nobles' sons could hope for education. The masses of youth were buried

under heavy forced labor. But now this feudal oppression is gone and will never return. The youth will move from backwardness to progress, from darkness to light. Their future is bright and wide."

The Panchen Erdeni, just verging on twenty-two, spoke of "paradise" in terms of youth's future. Perhaps he recalled his own youth, a peasant boy in Chinghai. His own life had certainly brightened and widened. The fine quality of the monk's robe of wine-red wool in which he entered, with its lining of bright yellow and its floating scarf of yellow silk, his tall boots of gold brocade, the gold wrist-watch entwined with the Buddhist rosary on his wrist, the new palace, — all showed a fortune unforeseen in his youth. The major change was that the "Democratic Reform" had been passed July 17 by the government of Tibet under his chairmanship and the Tenth Panchen Erdeni would go down in history as the head of the government that abolished serfdom in Tibet. He seemed actually taller than in Peking three months earlier when I had interviewed him; he was certainly more assured and mature.

The Panchen exchanged *hatas* with the two leaders chosen by the correspondents for such formalities. For three hours he talked informally between sips of hot buttered tea on any subjects they chose to raise — Buddhism, the rebellion, Tibet's past and future. Most of the time he spoke without notes, in full and happy command of himself and the situation. After some

refreshments he took his guests to the races of the Riding Academy of which he is the personal patron, and showed riders who could hide on the gallop behind the horse's body to shoot. Dances were performed both religious and secular. The ten-hour visit ended with a banquet where the Panchen's father and mother sat at one of the tables, still hale and hearty at fifty and smiling as if unaware of the rumors abroad.

All the visitors knew that the headlines in the Western world had the Panchen Erdeni under house arrest and incommunicado in the Potala Palace, because his father was "accused of treason" for leading armed rebellion against Peking. . . . Alan Winnington took a picture of the Panchen and his cheerful father and mother, and hoped for a world scoop by sending it to the London *Daily Worker* by radio transmission from Lhasa. Radio transmission of pictures across all the cold-war-waves of the planet seemed a bit incredible from Tibet.

"We are glad," continued the Panchen, "that correspondents from twelve countries can see and report the situation in Tibet since the rebellion. There have been some truthful reports abroad and also some distorted and false reports. We hope you will report truthfully and dispel slander. We move in Tibet towards a better life. The rebels started a bad thing and it was turned into a good thing. For those same rebels were the main block to progress and now their power is gone from Tibet."

The three hours' discussion ranged over many subjects: the history of Tibet in relation to China, the sects of Buddhism, the reforms of Tson Khapa in the fourteenth century and the reforms today.

Historically, the Panchen declared, Tibet had been part of China since the Mongol Dynasty seven hundred years ago, and Shigatse had always been loyal to this union. The real purpose of the recent rebellion had been to perpetuate serfdom, but few would have joined it if the purpose had been announced. The rebels had confused people by using the cloak of religion and nationalism, so that people thought they would die a glorious death for their nation and their faith. Thus the serfowners deceived some people and coerced others.

Lamas who joined the rebellion had failed to understand the teaching of Buddha which does not permit lamas to take up arms. Those lamas who joined the ranks of murderers were no longer Buddha's followers, for they killed people under cloak of religion.

In Shigatse, said the Panchen, there was no rebellion and so there is no anti-rebellion drive and no "accusation meetings" occur. There is, however, the drive to abolish personal servitude and forced labor, to reduce land rent and interest, and to distribute the land to the tillers, by purchase from the nobles and monasteries through payment by the Central Government. This goes ahead.

The Panchen expressed hope for the future of Buddhism and respect for all its many sects. The Divine Principle, he said, is expressed in many aspects, and Buddhism has "many gods". At first these aspects seem to contradict each other, but the fuller understanding of one aspect leads to better understanding of all. There are very many sects, each emphasizing a different aspect of deity. In Tibet, the sects are mainly four. Relations between them have at times been bad enough to lead to armed struggle.

"But for all followers of Sakyamuni the aim is peace, both in the sense of absence of war and of cessation of suffering for all beings, in time and in eternity."

No reforms are needed in Buddha's teaching, said the Panchen. Reforms are needed in the practises of believers because these from time to time become corrupt. Tson Khapa was a great reformer in his day; new reforms are needed now. Because of the evils of serfdom, many falsities have become mixed with religion. The people demand reform but they still believe in Buddhism. "We hope that religion will be purified of its evil customs. We are confident that the Central Government will protect religion in such a form."

The Panchen Erdeni thus expects from the future a purified Buddhism and a bright hope for Tibet's youth. He seemed to have reconciled, at least for the time,

the aims of religion and politics in "building paradise" in Tibet today.

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The serfs saw "paradise" in their present freedom from torment, their self-expression in the beginnings of government, their hope of a rapid increase in food, and beyond this, in education and all the good things of life. For the worldly details of this paradise and its possibility, I turned to the economic experts and first to the Lhasa Experimental Farm.

"What kind of a paradise can be built on the roof of the world in this half-starved Tibet?" I asked its manager Chang Chun-tien. "With the new release of energy by freedom, can the Tibetan plateau provide food for a good life?"

"It can," he replied, "and fairly soon. We have proved it on this farm."

The Lhasa Experimental Farm lies a few miles west of Lhasa, just beyond Drepung Monastery on a reclaimed river bed. "The *kasha* would not let us have good land," said Manager Chang. "The Dalai Lama personally asked Peking in 1954 for an experimental farm and we hoped for that wide stretch of land west of the Potala, whose gentle slope is fertile and easy to irrigate and right on the main highway for peasants coming to Lhasa to see. It is uncultivated still. All we could get was a pasture in a river-bottom, half flooded, the other half boulders and sand. It took us 30,000 man-days of labor just to build the soil. For years a lot of our time went to digging ditches, dyking

Author views big cabbage crop at Experimental Farm

against the flood, blasting out rocks and carting in good earth.

"Our results have not been bad. Tibet's basic food is first barley, then wheat, peas and soy. We have developed better varieties of these and added millet and maize. Tibet had only six kinds of vegetables; we produce forty-two, of which thirty grow well in the open field and twelve in frames or hot-houses. Some crops grow better here than in the lowlands. Cabbages, carrots and tomatoes grow to enormous size without becoming coarse. Flax, hemp and jute also grow well in Tibet."

I went around the experimental farm with the manager and saw some of the enormous vegetables, a whole field of cabbages many of which were 40 inches in diameter and weighing fifty pounds, a fifty-five pound squash. I had tea with tomatoes, each of which weighed a pound and a half, yet their texture and taste was unexcelled. The farm had been getting 45 bushels per acre of barley on its average field and 90 bushels per acre on its experimental field, which are four and eight times the average yield in Tibet. Wheat was uneven; in 1957 the farm got 66 bushels per acre, in 1958 only 38 bushels.

"With all our efforts and science," said Chang, "we shall never get on this soil as good results as most of the peasants can get if they cultivate properly. They have better soil. One can find an advantage even in this handicap, for we know that anything we can grow will succeed better in the villages. But it is humiliat-

ing for a teacher to know that every good pupil can surpass him."

"Can't you get that field by the Potala," I asked, "now the *kasha* is gone?"

"We haven't asked for it," replied Chang. "The People's Liberation Army will grow food on it and peasants will learn by seeing it. We have too much labor invested in this place to abandon it now. Later we may have other farms in other districts. Just now our chief task seems to lie in the villages. For the first time the peasants invite us. In the early years they feared to talk to us. Then they began to ask us timidly for seed. Since the rebellion is quelled, the demand for us is suddenly very great. The mood has changed. The peasants treat us like one of the family and demand anything they need: information, seed, tools. They discuss with us all kinds of problems. Even questions of religion come to us, but we refuse to handle that subject.

"We have sent personnel out into two counties to help organize better farming. In one county we have three staff members who have been living there for some time. I myself have learned a very deep lesson. I under-estimated these people. I had not realized how fast their consciousness would rise or how great their demand for information would be when it came."

Some peasants had seen in a film that elsewhere in China peasants applied much fertilizer and used tractors. They asked if this should be done in Tibet. Chang told them that fertilizing should certainly be

done, and implements should be improved, but tractors would have to wait until there was a railroad to Lhasa, for it was too costly to bring tractors over a thousand miles by road.

Some peasants came to ask: "Can you help prevent hail?" Chang replied that he understood they had a temple that did that kind of thing. "Oh, that is just superstition," the peasants said. "We heard somewhere that people shot off cannon against hail." Chang told them that so far cannon had not proved a success. Nobody yet had found how to handle hail, but the farm could help them handle frost by weather reports and actions in the fields. Hail had to be handled by spreading the burden through state insurance. The peasants were interested in all these ideas.

In one place white worms were eating the crop. The farm's representative was asked what to do. He knew that religious scruples in Tibet are strong against killing any creature, even an insect pest. He replied, "I can't tell you what to do. *We* would kill the worms to save the crop, but this may be against your beliefs". The peasants discussed it among themselves and finally all except one aged man decided that they could kill worms with a clear conscience. The aged man said: "I'll kill if the rest of you kill, but I am still afraid."

Chang gave one more example. Large piles of stones are found in many places along the roads of Tibet, where passing pilgrims are accustomed to add a stone and say a prayer. They are known as *mani* piles.

Passers-by respect the piles by going around them in a prescribed manner. Recently, in fighting a sudden flood, the peasants threw *mani* piles into the completion of a dyke. The working committee of the Communist Party in Lhasa heard of it and wrote to their local working team.

"What are you doing, acting against religion?"

"We didn't even know of it," replied the working team. "The local peasant 'activists' did it."

"Check on those local 'activists'," replied the working committee. "Be sure they have the peasants' unanimous support. We don't want any peasant complaints." As often happens with new recruits, the local "activists" may be a bit "dizzy with success". While the farm never discusses the Dalai Lama with the peasants, one of its personnel overheard a peasant say in a small group: "The Dalai Lama is the biggest serfowner in Tibet! We may have to 'struggle' with him."

Chang felt that if any particular superstition now came into conflict with the need of food, that superstition would die. "Their need for a better livelihood is urgent," he said. "Now that they are free, they will find ways around any belief that conflicts with better crops.

"These old views will not die at once. We are running courses in several villages in farm techniques. The first task for the winter is to accumulate fertilizer. In most of Tibet, animal manure is used for fuel. Until new sources of fuel are developed, the choice

between fuel and fertilizer will not be easy. We also urge deep ploughing with metal ploughshares, but we do not know how far they will accept this, for the old belief was that iron poisons the soil."

I discussed with Manager Chang the figures I had been given of Tibet's average yield and total harvest and amount of arable land. Cultivated land had been given as roughly three million *mou*, or 500,000 acres, and average yield at 100 to 120 catties per *mou*, or 11 to 12 bushels per acre. The total grain harvest, in barley and wheat — and peas and soy, reduced to grain equivalents in flour — was 5,866,700 bushels. Since nearly a quarter of this went for seed, this left some 4,500,000 bushels for food for all the 1,200,000 people of Tibet. This meant about 225 pounds of basic grain per person, even without a single pound for chickens or pigs. It was a half-starvation ration and it tallied with what the peasants had said. Nor was it supplemented by meat and vegetables. Tibetans ate few vegetables and almost no meat, except in the pastures where they ate meat and almost no grain.

"How long," I asked, "will it take before Tibet is well fed?"

"Not long," said Chang, "if you mean in terms of grain. Longer if you add meat and a varied diet. The first swift increase will be in grain yield and this will be fast. Even this autumn the grain yield will be higher than usual. Though it was planted in serfdom, it was cultivated and reaped in freedom, and more weeding and cultivation were done than formerly.

Next year the crop will be still larger, for they will plough and fertilize this winter, and plant for the first time with fairly clean seed. Under serfdom they seldom had clean seed, for all the harvest went to the master's warehouse and by the time the peasants got it back as seed, it was mixed, and usually polluted with grass.

"It will not be hard for the peasants to triple their present yield by fairly simple measures, better tools and seed, more ploughing, fertilizing, watering, now that they have freedom and initiative. To reach 30 bushels per acre should be quick. That would give 670 pounds of grain per capita after deducting seed. Tibet would be three times as well fed as it has been for centuries. There would be grain even for chickens and pigs."

"How fast can they reach that thirty bushels per acre?" I persisted. "Within five years?"

"Some peasants may reach it this autumn," replied Chang. "I should think Tibet's general average could reach it in well under five years."

Manager Chang could not tell me how much waste-land there was in Tibet that could be cultivated. I had been to several departments and nobody could tell me this. "The *kasha* allowed no statistics," they said. "We are gathering information now." The best guess from people who had visited many areas was that most of the best arable land was already under cultivation, though the methods were poor. The cultivated land might possibly be increased by fifty per-

cent or even perhaps doubled, but only by expenditure of labor, in drainage, irrigation and other forms of reclamation. There was no need of reclaiming much wasteland at present. Labor should first go to raising the yield. This alone would quickly raise the standard of grain food in Tibet. With this view Chang also agreed.

Hunger for grain would, it seemed, be quickly ended. Meat, milk, butter would take longer. The growth of livestock is slow and nobody really knows how many head of livestock there are. Estimates ranged from five and a half to seven million, counting yaks, horses, cattle, sheep and goats, but not pigs. Butter is produced in Tibet. All the monasteries burn it lavishly, Jokhan alone burns 300,000 pounds a year. The nobles had it plentifully in tea. The serfs saw little of it.

While few of the products of the high pastures were enjoyed in the past by the farming population, it is in livestock of the pastoral areas that Tibet's long range future lies. While figures here only begin to be collected, Fang Tse-hin of the Working Committee's propaganda bureau told me that, from areas already investigated, Tibet's mountain pastures seemed almost limitless, but the grass was of poor quality. The pastoral regions could profit from better methods even more than the farms. They needed better grass, better breeding methods and some shelter against sudden storms.

In the Black River District, he noted, there were 171,000 square kilometers listed as "grazing area", but only 80,000 square kilometers were actually grazed, and here there was an average of 1.46 yaks and 2.83 sheep per square kilometer, certainly not crowded. Grass was scanty, only three or four inches high, and not very nutritious. Inner Mongolia, Chinghai and Sikang all had much better types of grass that might be sown in Tibet. Herds had no shelter. They were eaten by leopards and other wild animals. They were wiped out by storms. An unexpected blizzard in the Black River District killed half the livestock in 1956.

Fang gave the pastoral area as close to a million square kilometers, more than four fifths of all Tibet. Others gave a lower estimate; Fang may have been including the pastures in the agricultural area. Nobody knows precisely yet. But everyone knows that Tibet has many millions of acres of grazing lands which have been badly handled. The grazing rights were owned by absentee nobles and monasteries; the herds were owned in complex ways and under many feudal taxes which left little chance for the herdsmen's initiative. Reform in the pastures will take more time, both because of the great distances and because of the great variety of livestock ownership. But for Tibet's future prosperity, the rational development of the pastures will pay off even better than the reform in the agricultural areas.

Tibet's future lies, a few years hence, in well run pastures under a collective organization able to sow

grass from planes, to breed better livestock with artificial insemination, to protect men and beasts from blizzards, to give herdsmen a decent human life. This happens already in the great open spaces of Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang; it will come in Tibet. A social system that permits the death of half the livestock by sudden blizzard has no place in modern life.

Hides and wool and fur have been Tibet's main export. By selling these abroad, the upper strata bought luxury goods from foreign lands. The rebels killed a considerable number of livestock. The Tibetan people will wish in future to use for themselves more wool, leather and fur. For both these reasons the export is not likely to rise in the next five years. Five years hence it should begin to provide Tibet's main cash income. Any great expansion will depend on better transport. What are the chances of this?

Let us first turn to industry and mining. Tibet has ten kinds of handicraft, including the weaving of coarse woolen cloth called *pulu,* the weaving of carpets, tanning and leather work, the making of felt boots, furniture made by carpenters, metal work in silver and also in iron. Building materials exist, stone and lime and bricks and lumber, though lumber must be transported a considerable distance. Handicraftsmen in the past have been oppressed, often to beggary; raw wool has been taken on yak-back to India and later bought back as woolen cloth, at heavy expense both ways. In the future handicraft cooperatives will be helped by government-paid instructors and by loans

from the state bank. Some industry will grow on the base of present handicraft. Big industry, however, awaits better transport.

Minerals in Tibet are very many. This can be seen by the amateur from the color of the cliffs. No adequate geologic survey was allowed by the *kasha,* but a few investigations were made. The rather conservative statement given me by the department of industry of the Working Committee is that many kinds of minerals are clearly widespread that the geologic strata are relatively recent and not all deposits are in exploitable quantities or readily mined veins, that a proper survey is the first need, and better transport the second before any serious mining can be undertaken. By better transport, a railroad into Lhasa is meant.

Water-power in Tibet is plentiful but variable; it depends on melting snows. There are, however, many rivers sufficiently steady to give power. There are also many lakes, and those at the lower altitudes do not freeze. If Tibetans should ever develop a taste for fish and adapt their religion to permit fish-eating, they could have fish without much trouble. This is a question that need not yet be raised.

The question that must be raised is that of transport. This is the bottle-neck. The long haul from other provinces of China has always through the centuries handicapped Tibet's development. The Princess Wen Cheng in 641 A.D. brought silkworms and handicrafts; the haul was very long. More recently the price of

tea for Tibetans dropped to one third the former price when the three auto highways were opened from 1954-57. Part of the drop in price came because the nobles had formerly taken a hundred percent profit while the State Trading Company sells at cost plus transport. But most of the drop came because yak-back transport was replaced by trucks.

Truck transport, however, is also not cheap on 1,300 miles of mountain highway when gasoline for the trucks is truck-transported, and when there is little or no return freight. At present the cost of freight transport from Sining to Lhasa is reckoned at 40 fen (16 cents) a pound, without counting the return of the empty truck which is subsidized by Peking. Transport on cotton goods often costs more than the goods. Transport on heavy machinery and on minerals is prohibitive except for very important needs. Little other mining is planned until transport improves.

A railroad is therefore projected from Sining to Lhasa. Nobody will even guess just when it will come . . . but everyone expects it some time within five years. It will follow more or less the route of the present Chinghai-Lhasa highway; this is 1,300 miles across the Tang'La Range, one of the major mountain barriers of Asia. The railroad depends on China's steel production. This rises fast, but the many demands for steel rise even faster.

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From this swift survey, the plans for the building of Paradise on the roof of the world begin to appear.

Hunger will quickly be banished; adequate grain needs only an increase of yield through simple methods without additional acreage. When needed, additional acreage is also available for the labor cost of drainage and reclamation. Vegetables can increase fast; they need only labor power and adequate seed. Meat, butter and milk will increase more slowly. If Jokhan Monastery should convert from butter-lamps to mineral oil or electricity, one quarter pound of butter per year per capita would be at once be added to the food supply, giving Tibetans several more glasses of buttered tea. If the more than 2,000 monasteries should go off butter, this might solve the butter ration. Failing that, butter and milk, and meat, if and when religion permits its eating, should rise steadily and be adequate within five years.

Clothing and housing will also develop, even without a railroad. Handicraft cooperatives, with a little help from state loans, will work up wool and leather into clothing, and cotton goods will come from the Chinese interior at fairly heavy transport cost. Stone will be quarried and lumber cut and brick and tile made by ancient methods, with tools somewhat improved. Food, clothing and shelter will thus increase, despite the bottle-neck in transport.

Long range prosperity, however, lies first in livestock and later perhaps in mining. Here the development depends on serious improvement in pastures and cattle-breeding, and on a geological survey. Beyond

that, it depends on transport and especially on a railroad. Tibetans, by religion, have been disinclined to mining, which is said to "disturb the soil". This prejudice also should pass without conflict with the coming of the other developments, spread gradually over five years.

For the minds of Tibetans are changing. "Paradise" is more than food, clothing and shelter and material wealth. The Tibetans at last feel free! From the first ragged herdsman on the road from the airport to Lhasa we felt the joyous awakening in the land. We felt it again in the dances and greetings at the Jewel Park picnic, in the hospitality of villages, in the defiance of "accusation meetings".

Many of the Hans now working with Tibetans, said to me, as did Manager Chang: "We have underestimated these people. Now that they are freed from the shackles of serfdom, all kinds of abilities emerge. They are really a remarkable people."

Already it was clear that the Tibetan people would grow and flourish, that the long decline of their population was ended, that they had become masters of the world's high roof and this mastery would grow. They would find their own path between the old superstitions and the goals of modern life. They had a genius for drama and dancing and also a practical logic that I had seen in those filthy sweepers in the Potala when we discussed the Dalai Lama's treasuries,

the happy logic that tossed those *mani* piles to dyke the flood.

Their land would never offer easy living; it offered the lure of earth's highest mountains and a hard yet bounteous victory over stubborn soil. They were fearless and unembarrassed in their freedom, and friendly to those who came as friend. That old peasant who chucked me under the chin and asked my age! Those six wild riders, who tossed their *hatas* over my hands with gallant bows! They brought to the world a new flavor, of fairy-tale and labor, of dancing and common sense, the distillation of a thousand years.

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We took off from the Tibet airport on the ninth of September when harvest was finished in Takun, at high gear in Loka, and in Lhasa just begun. We had seen the democratic reform in villages, city and monasteries in the period of the peasants' awakening till the harvest celebration and the first distribution of land. Whatever came after we must follow by news wire in Peking.

More than a thousand technicians arrived in Lhasa in early October: geologists, engineers, doctors, nurses. The new Peasants' Associations were ready for them now. The Panchen Erdeni reported to a Peking meeting that 360,000 serfs and 20,000 slaves had already been emancipated and received land and taken

in their own crops, running at 14.5 bushels per acre, twenty percent higher than the previous average. They were "taking the power of government into their hands at the basic level", i.e. the township. He added: "The desire for knowledge grows with every day." Ten days later the Panchen, in another meeting, condemned the United Nations for "illegal interference in internal affairs". That was the time when, under Washington's prodding, the U.N. Assembly censured China for all these actions in Tibet!

The harvest moved north into higher elevations throughout October. The fields were still reported "alive with peasants singing as they gather crops". They formed mutual aid teams, and helped each other by combining draft animals. When the grain was taken, they at once began to plough for the next sowing. For the first time they were sorting seed and collecting manure. The Experimental Farm had published a booklet on cultivation for the Tibetan plateau and was sending it out, together with all the seed produced by several years' experiments with 3,069 strains of grain.

"All buildings damaged by the rebels or in battle are now repaired," read the wire from Lhasa on November 30. "A row of new silver-gray houses has been built west of the Potala. Building materials, especially brick and lime, are going out from Lhasa to other parts of Tibet." Another November wire said

that the ancient "district of disaster" in Lhasa, which formerly held three brothels, four saloons, twelve gambling houses and an opium den, and was so full of brawling that ordinary people feared to pass it at night, was now a "district of happiness" with prostitution and brawling gone, streets clean, under the chairmanship of a forty-five year old woman, a former house-slave.

Two hundred thousand new farm tools had been found by the end of November in warehouses where they had lain since 1955. The Central Government had sent them as a free gift to the Tibetan people — they had cost a million and a half yuan — but the *kasha* and nobles had held them in storage. Now they were out; they included walking-ploughs, harrows, hoes and sheep-shears. With them the winter ploughing began. "New walking-ploughs are appearing in Loka," we read in mid-December. "Most of the land in Loka and Lhasa areas is being ploughed twice."

The first Lhasa Municipal Conference of People's Deputies opened on January 20th, and set up the new city administration on the same day. There were over one hundred deputies, who, for the first time in Tibet's history, had been elected by the people's organizations at grass-roots level. They included peasants, herdsmen, merchants, lamas and "patriotic upper strata". They represented the 170,000 people of Greater Lhasa, which consists of seven counties and six city wards.

"The changes of the past nine months over-shadow those of the past centuries," said the new mayor, Tsuiko Dongchu-tseren in his opening speech. "The democratic revolution has been basically completed in Lhasa which was the stronghold of serfdom in Tibet."

Listing briefly the changes, the mayor stated that the 120,000 peasants of Greater Lhasa had become owners of the 70,000 acres they tilled, that usurious debts handed down and increasing with the generations had been either wiped out or greatly reduced, amounting to an average saving per capita of 1,500 pounds of grain which was several years' food. Work had been found for 5,000 unemployed and housing built for 300 homeless paupers. Dirty, uneven streets had been paved; the city looked clean. Before "liberation" there had not been a single public school in Lhasa area; now there were one hundred and fifty. Seven thousand former serfs and their sons and daughters had become literate.

"Old, poverty-stricken Lhasa has become a lively Lhasa full of hope," concluded the mayor.

The Great Prayer Festival, the Monlam, which ushers in the Tibetan New Year with three weeks' celebration, came with the beginning of March. The previous year it had been used to launch rebellion; pilgrims coming from all Tibet had been thrown into crowds to detain the Dalai Lama in Jewel Park and to make demonstrations against the Hans. In 1960 the Monlam opened in splendor. Prayers in Jokhan had the usual number of butter-lamps and many new

silken banners. Living Buddhas from the Big Three Monasteries attended. The Panchen Erdeni took the occasion to state: "The past year has seen in Tibet earth-shaking changes. Former slaves have become masters of their destiny." That last sentence sounds to me like heresy to the doctrine of *karma,* but the Panchen knows his Buddhism. He has studied it many years.

The statement, heretical or not heretical, was proved by information. Figures to the end of February showed that land had been distributed to a rural population of 610,000, which was 77 percent of the population in the 57 counties where the reform had been especially pushed. (The other 21 of Tibet's 78 counties, mostly pastoral, had been left for the next year.) More than 1,080 Peasants' Associations had been organized in the five areas of Lhasa, Loka, Chamdo, Shigatse and Lingtse,[1] and government officials were being elected at township level. The harvest of 1959, sown in serfdom but reaped in freedom, had been ten to twenty percent higher than usual. But the harvest in 1960 would certainly top it. For the land was now in the hands of the tillers and would be sown in freedom, and everywhere a campaign was developing for a bumper crop.

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With flags fluttering and drums rolling, the mutual aid teams of the liberated serfs in the Lhasa area set out on the first day of April, 1960, for the first spring

[1]Formerly Takun.

sowing on their own fields. The land, the draft animals, the implements were theirs at last and the crop would be their own.

The East Wind Mutual Aid Team was out in the western suburb before the rising sun struck even the high gold roofs of Potala Palace. The beginning of sowing is a solemn national rite. Flags were set at the edge of the field and the pleasant odor of burning pine twigs rose like incense on the dawn air. The horns of the three oxen had been decorated with red streamers and white *hata.* The team leader Gaisang Faldron offered to each of the oxen a cup of barley wine. Behind him the girl Yangdrom blessed the three ploughmen with dyed sheaves of wheat, tokens of a bumper crop.

The team leader moved into the field to break the soil. Here the ritual suddenly diverged from the past. The soil broke under three new iron ploughshares instead of the ancient wooden sticks. The new harrow broke in an hour more clods than forty men with wooden hammers once broke in a day. Three women followed, sowing the wheat seeds into the newly ploughed, harrowed, manured and watered soil. Behind them came ten people who divided the seeded land into small, neat plots for irrigation. The East Wind Mutual Aid Team of the western suburb of Lhasa was setting a target of 66 bushels of wheat to the acre, equal to the top record of the Experimental Farm!

Thus the former serfs of the Lhasa district continued the building of Paradise into the second year.

Appendix

Some Data on the Sino-Indian Border Issue

From Indian official diplomatic notes Sept. 26, and Nov. 4, 1959, and Feb. 12, 1960, and China notes December 26, 1959 and April 3, 1960

The source of the border issue between China and India lies in a century of British encroachments on China, which left unresolved disputes. The issue was brought to world attention by the anti-Chinese clamor that arose in India in early August 1959. We first consider the clamor and then some territorial facts.

Two anti-Chinese outcries arose in India in 1959. The first broke when the People's Liberation Army put down the March rebellion. Charges of "ruthless suppression and massacre" arose, based on tales of rebel refugees fleeing into India. This storm died for lack of confirmation and because only some 16,000 people fled into India, a number indicating no extensive strife.

The storm about the border lasted longer. It began about August 6th, when Prime Minister Nehru and other leaders attacked China by speeches in parliament and elsewhere as having drawn maps "to show great chunks" of Indian territory as part of China, as having

invaded Indian lands, launched armed attacks and being generally "an aggressor". These charges were made almost daily until they spread all over India. They continue in mid-April 1960 as I write.

A nationwide anti-China campaign developed in India. Demonstrations were made in front of China's embassy and consulates; indignities shown to the portrait of Mao Tse-tung. Some MPs wanted to bomb the highway China had built between Sinkiang and Tibet which, they said, crossed India's Ladakh. Students wrote pledges in blood to go to the front. Right-wing politicians attacked Nehru for not attacking China enough. By January Nehru was "hoping to avoid war" but demanding that India "prepare" and the government defense plans announced that "the troubles with China are not a short-term affair".

The western world was willingly convinced by headlines that Chinese troops were advancing steadily and aggressively into India. Lovers of peace the world over wrote to me in Peking: "Why does China stir this up just now?"

In Peking it did not appear that China was stirring up anything. If you asked about "armed aggressions", you were told that the People's Liberation Army had taken up posts on the boundary in 1951 and had not advanced since. No changes in maps had been made any time in the century; the few maps published were marked as having been copied from Shanghai-published maps a decade or two ago. Chinese explained that they did not want to publish new maps until the boun-

dary was agreed with India. British encroachments for a century had left many disputes. China showed no hostility to India on the subject, made no demonstrations in front of Indian embassy or consulates, made no demand for increased military budget, but gently dropped the budget for arms from 5.9 to a mere 5.3 percent of the total budget. China did not even keep the border issue on the front page; for weeks it never appeared in the press at all. It was left to diplomatic notes, which were infrequent and which even the anti-Chinese press found "conciliatory in tone".

China was saying that the boundary had never been "delimited" and was proposing that it be "negotiated". India said that the boundary *had* been delimited by treaty, custom or administration and that India knew precisely where it was, and would not even discuss her basic claims. Small details might be negotiated. Chou En-lai's first requests for a talk were refused by Nehru. Some weeks later, when the Kerala election was over, Nehru invited Chou En-lai to come to Delhi for a talk, but indicated that he expected little result since he would not negotiate the entire border. Chou accepted cordially; the talks brought a joint agreement that appropriate officials of both countries should meet from June to September 1960 to examine jointly "historical documents, records, accounts, maps, and other relevant material".

This refers the border to long discussion. Data which will thus be examined is given briefly here.

We shall find it convenient to consider this very long border in three main sections, in which different conditions exist: the western section, called "East Ladakh" by India, where the disputed area is some 33,000 square kilometers of high icy waste which contains an important highway between Sinkiang and Tibet; the middle section, which India seldom mentions, where dispute concerns little territory but several populated points; and the eastern section, the most important, where in 1914 a British officer named McMahon drew a line on a map from Bhutan to Burma, cutting from Tibet for India some 90,000 square kilometers that include some good farmland and forest, and the dispute is whether the "McMahon Line" ever attained any more validity than a British officer's dream. India claims it as legal and final; China says it never was.

1) The western section which India calls Eastern Ladakh is called by China "Hotien County in Sinkiang and Rudok County in Tibet". It is a jumble of high peaks, cliffs, glaciers and mountain pastures that runs to 17,000 feet elevation. The only people who live there with any regularity are Tibetan and Uighur herdsmen who come up for the high pasture in summer and leave in winter. India has never used the area; she cannot easily reach it across the great ranges. Indian officers have stated that even parachute troops cannot land there, for the entire terrain is jagged with precipices.

For China the area is important as the only practicable traffic route between Sinkiang and Tibet, the two

largest, wildest areas of China. It has been so important that two hundred years ago the Ching Dynasty established armed "check-posts" along the ancient caravan route. These posts have been maintained ever since, right through the warlord period and the time of Chiang Kai-shek. In 1949 the People's Liberation Army took over the Sinkiang section from the Kuomintang soldiers and in late 1950 they used the road to enter western Tibet. They then developed it as a permanent supply route. In March 1956 they brought in 3,000 civilian workers to help the army improve the road into a motor highway. For eighteen months they exploded mountains, bridged torrents and India never heard of it until Peking announced its finished motor highway in autumn 1957. When India now claims to have administered this area for generations, the Chinese are "unconvinced". One might also ask: "If India made no protest when the Chinese troops took over in 1951, or when they built the highway in 1956-57, why make it now?"

India claims the area by virtue of a treaty made in 1842 between Kashmir and Tibet. Peking replies: 1) That agreement settled local conflicts by pledging to respect each other's boundary but did not state where the boundary was. 2) Tibet had no authority to conclude a boundary agreement and did not do so. 3) Eighty percent of the disputed territory is in Sinkiang and neither Ladakh nor Tibet can detach it by treaty.

The future of the western section seems fairly clear. China has owned, used and patrolled a road in this area for two centuries. India has never used it. British maps of the official Survey of India showed no boundary here as late as 1943. After India became independent, the 1950 survey showed a boundary but marked it "undefined". After 1954 the boundary was marked by India as "defined". But as late as August 28, 1959, Nehru said in Lok Sabha: "Nobody has marked it". The Indian claim a few months later that this area "had been associated with India's culture and tradition for two thousand years and is an indispensable part of Indian life and thought", must be taken as a "prestige" claim for bargaining purposes. It will not develop into war. If and when both India and China want a friendly border settlement, the western section presents few difficulties.

2) The middle section lies west of Nepal and can be quickly described. Here Tibet's large pastoral province, Ari, faces India's Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. The boundary difference between Indian and Chinese maps is not wide in area but contains several populated points. Nine such points, belonging fairly recently to China's Tibet, have been occupied by India. Two of them, Sang and Tsungsha, were occupied by British troops thirty years ago and have been protested by China ever since. The remaining seven — Parigas, Chuva, Chuje, Shipki Pass, Puling-Sumdo, Sangcha and Lapthal, — were occupied by Indian troops after 1954, that is within the past six years. Puling-Sumdo is a

special case. Listed in the 1954 Sino-Indian Treaty as a market town in which China gave India trading-rights, it was seized by Indian troops in the next two years as a possession. China protested the seizure as illegal but refused to change it by force.

India claims that, when Peking listed in the 1954 Treaty six passes in this region which traders and pilgrims might use, China thereby agreed with India's interpretation of the border. Peking replies that this is absurd. A right to trade is not a deed to a town. We made it clear in 1954 that we were negotiating a trade treaty, not a boundary. India does not stress this part of the border in the clamor against "China's aggression", for if any aggression is proved here, it is India's.

3) The major dispute is in the eastern section of the border, where the disputed area is 90,000 square kilometers, the entire southern slope of the Himalayas, much of it good farmland and forest. India claims this territory by virtue of the so-called "McMahon Line", drawn by a British officer named McMahon. India says the line was agreed at the Simla Conference in 1914 between Britain, China and Tibet.

Peking replies that the Simla Conference never even discussed the Sino-Indian border and never even heard of the McMahon Line, and that China never ratified the Simla Conference but repudiated it. The McMahon Line was signed, not in Simla but in Delhi, in a private deal between McMahon and Shatra, who was indeed a Tibetan delegate to Simla but who never

dared mention the McMahon Line to the other Tibetan delegates. When China learned of it some years later, China repudiated the McMahon Line and every Chinese government has repudiated it to this day. The McMahon Line therefore never became more than a project of a British officer which failed. Britain never officially claimed the McMahon Line and did not put it on any official map until after 1938. Later, when China was hard-pressed by the war with Japan, Britain began to occupy parts of the territory and put it on maps as "disputed boundary". Sir Henry Twynam, who was governor of Assam, the adjacent Indian province, in 1939, wrote in the London *Times* September 2, 1959: "The McMahon Line does not exist and never did".

Interesting details about the McMahon Line have been lately revealed in Lhasa by an aged man who was a delegate to Simla and by a nephew of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama who was for years in charge of official records. These state that Shatra wrote the Dalai Lama of McMahon's proposal and the Dalai Lama angrily forbade Shatra to yield an inch of Tibet. Shatra therefore at first refused McMahon, but when offered a bribe of five thousand rifles and half a million rounds of ammunition, Shatra signed but told no other Tibetans. When Shatra returned to Lhasa the Thirteenth Dalai Lama got the information from him and at once wrote to the British repudiating the agreement. This, say the Ṭibetans, is why Britain never dared claim that line. In 1947 when India took over

British claims and asked Lhasa to yield the territory, the Tibetans summoned a conference of all the highest officials and indignantly refused.

It remained for India to seize by armed force what Britain never got. On February 7, 1951, months before the PLA entered Tibet, Indian troops made surprise attack on Tawang, a county seat in the middle of the disputed territory, and jailed or threw out the Tibetan magistrates and Living Buddhas who had run that area for Lhasa for three centuries, ever since the Fifth Dalai Lama "unified the tribes". The last act of Chiang Kai-shek's ambassador in Delhi, before India recognized the new People's Republic of China, was a note of protest against India's "aggression in Tibet". China's new government, confronted by a *fait accompli,* told India that the seizure was illegal, but that Chinese troops would not retake the territory by arms, since Peking wished to negotiate the border. India has evaded negotiation and holds the disputed territory still. Chinese troops have orders not to cross the McMahon Line, "to avoid trouble with India". China's position is that the border is still to be properly negotiated.

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A question thus arises, not about the border but about the outcry made in India in early August 1959 against China's alleged invasions. It splits into three parts.

1) If India considers China's presence on the highway on the western section an "aggression", why did

she not protest in 1950-51 when Chinese troops took the positions or in 1956-57 when they built the auto highway? Chinese troops have not advanced. Why wait till August 1959 to object?

2) What "aggression" does India see in China's positions on the eastern section of the border, where India took by armed force all the disputed territory in 1951 and where Chinese troops have not even crossed the McMahon Line?

3) Was the outcry started by any armed action? Two armed clashes occurred on the border, on August 25-27 on the eastern section, and on October 21 on the western section. But the outcry against "China's aggression" began three weeks earlier. The armed clashes increased the clamor, but briefly. Each side said that the other side attacked; no outsider can check those distant areas. After each clash the talk about it soon died down — did India find she could not prove her account of the attack? But the general clamor against Chinese territorial aggression continued. Why?

If the clamor in India has no connection with the actual date on which China took her present positions, nor with any actual occupation by China of the territory claimed by McMahon, which India took and occupies, nor with any armed clashes, with what does it connect? The one important action by China in this period in Tibet was the abolition of serfdom by the new local government of Tibet on July 17, 1959. In the next weeks the cries of "land to the tiller" and the jubilation of emancipated serfs setting up Peasants'

Associations, were sweeping to the ends of Tibet. In early August, India raised a clamor about the border. Was there a connection here?

We turn thus to India's basic policy on Tibet and China as a whole. India seeks in China's strength a bulwark against Western demands, but keeps China's revolution at a distance, lest Indian peasants be stirred. India sought in Tibet a wide buffer against China's revolution. To this Tibet was adapted by size, autonomy and serfdom. India sought to strengthen all these barriers. In 1950-51 she tried to keep the People's Liberation Army from entering Tibet. When she failed, that was when India seized the territory claimed by McMahon, and put the Himalayan summits as a barrier against China's Tibet. India's relation to the March rebellion of the serf-owners is not clear, but elements in India clearly helped it, and Nehru called its suppression a "tragedy". When the Dalai Lama fled to India, Nehru at once tried to become mediator between him and Peking, which would have made India the definer and custodian of Tibet's "autonomy". This did not work and presently the shouts of liberated serfs spread across Tibet towards the Indian border. What remained but to slam that border shut by a patriotic storm?

If this interpretation is correct — and I see no other logical reason for the form, content and timing of the August 1959 outcry in India against China's "aggression" — then one need not expect the boundary to be settled soon. The boundary itself presents no serious difficulties. As compared with the bitter borders in

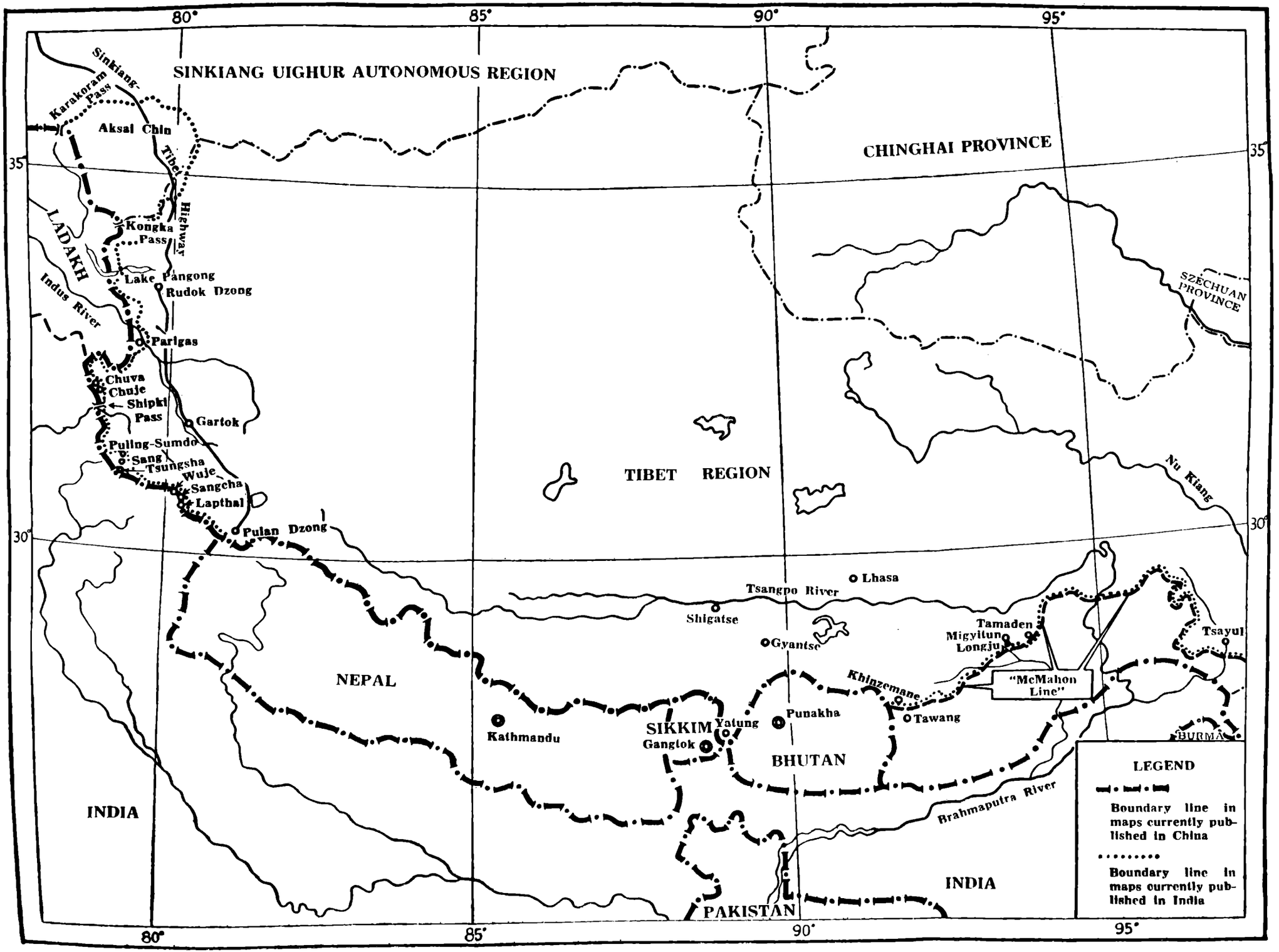
Europe, complicated by old national hates, where any possible border puts Slavs and Rumanians under Magyars or the reverse, this Sino-Indian border is an easy one. Neither Hans nor Hindus ever lived on this border, or fought or oppressed each other here, as on many difficult borders in the world. Here the people on both sides of the border are Tibetans. To find a proper line between Tibetans in China and Tibetans in India takes some joint research into old British encroachments and claims, and how far they have become embodied in the present life of the people, and also research into economic needs and local geography but not much more. Granted that both sides want a friendly border, it becomes a task for historians and surveyors with some local visits. It cannot be helped by patriotic outcries.

But it may be that India's ruling class does not want a friendly border just now with China's Tibet. They may want a case against China to offset the pull of China's "free bread" and "land to the tiller" with the Indian people. They may want a hostile border, not hostile to the point of actual war but hostile enough to make an iron curtain, protecting India's peasants from the revolution in Tibet.

They may also want that billion dollars a year from the World Bank and other sources controlled by America. Leading world economists estimate this as India's annual need for years, if she is to escape economic breakdown. Hailed by the West as Asia's chief champion of the capitalist way of progress, In-

dia's industrialization lags far behind China's, while her food situation worsens. Dire need of foreign funds to prevent chaos and famine may press India to take the lead, as she has done, in Washington's anti-China campaign in southern Asia. So, regardless of actual facts on the border, India's outcry against it may keep on.

The April 1960 talks between Chou En-lai and Nehru have, however, placed the border issue on a new basis. Both sides have now agreed that the border is no sharply delimited line but a complex, disputed area requiring joint research into many documents. The border issue thus is seen to be one for patient research rather than for patriotic clamor. Tension in India and South Asia has therefore noticeably lessened, at least for the time.

May 1, 1960

Sketch Map of the Sino-Indian Boundary